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BY
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AALBORG UNIVERSITY
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ENGLISH SUMMARY

This PhD thesis explores the practices of local community work in marginalized residential areas in Denmark. Local community projects are, in Denmark, initiated when areas of non-profit housing become designated and demarcated as "marginalized" or as "ghettos" by the Danish government, and these projects are meant to counteract this marginalization. Drawing on theoretical sensibilities from actor-network theory and Science and Technology Studies (STS), this thesis argues and analyses how practices of local community work *enact orderings of life*, i.e. that the practices of local community work are on-going and precarious attempts to shape the ways in which people lead their lives within these marginalized residential areas.

The premise for this exploration of local community work is that a significant amount of current research has explored, for instance, how residents experience living in marginalized residential areas; if interventions in marginalized residential areas have effects; and the histories and discourses surrounding marginalized residential areas. However, significantly less research has explored the practices of local community work that are initiated to intervene in marginalized residential areas. Empirically, the thesis is based on approximately 216 hours of participant observation in three local community projects, as well as 18 interviews with professionals and seven with residents. It consists of four articles, each of which engages empirically and analytically with local community work in Denmark, describing and analysing its practices, and how these practices enact orderings of life.

Article A, **"Infrastructuring the social: Local community work, urban policy and marginalized residential areas in Denmark"** (published in Environment and Planning A), argues that the policies and practices of local community work participate in infrastructuring the social. Firstly, an analysis is conducted of how urban and social policies, alongside Local Revitalization Plans, designate particular residential areas as marginalized. Furthermore, the article demonstrates how local community work attempts to provide opportunities for the residents to *move* – both physically (out of the areas) and figuratively (closer to the spheres of "regular society", such as good health or employment). This entails a reworking of the agencies of residents, so as to make themselves responsible for carrying out these movements. Lastly, it is argued that these processes taken together have the purpose of intervening upon the area to remake it through these new movements of residents.

Article B, "**Making multiple responsibilities: On responsibilization and local community work in marginalized residential areas in Denmark**", explores how local community work attempts to "responsibilize" residents. Drawing on STS, the article empirically shows how this happens through the on-going making of

numerical and narrative accounts that define residents, what the problems of residents are and whether residents are being responsible. Following this, the article shows how the making of responsible residents entails the distribution of responsibility between local community workers and residents; local community workers assume responsibility for residents in processes that are messy and often fragile. This article further presents how the making of responsibility should not be considered a singular endeavour, but rather a *multiple* and *relational* endeavour.

Article C, "**Making life liveable: Local community work between the state and the margin in Denmark**", shows how the practices of local community work are caught up in a tension between balancing the goals of the state and the needs of the local community. This article demonstrates how local community workers attempt to make life liveable on the margins through diverse and practical forms of care that attend to the complex (and sometimes mundane) lives of residents. Furthermore, the article demonstrates how this work of care is dependent on associations to and dissociations from traditional centres of authority, which enables local community workers to get close to residents.

Article D, **"The multiplicity of problems in local community work: Bringing STS and social work together"** analyses how problems become specified and translated through the practices of local community work. Drawing on the "ontological turn" within STS, this article argues that problems emerge through practices of local community work in ways that are characterized by contingency and "bricolage", as well as by normativity and knowledge. In this way, this article seeks both to provide a more nuanced understanding of social problems within social work and contribute to the literature on the relations between problems and solutions in STS.

DANSK RESUME

Denne afhandling undersøger boligsocialt arbejde i udsatte boligområder i Danmark, nærmere bestemt vil det sige, at afhandlingen undersøger og belyser måderne hvorpå boligsocialt arbejdes praksisser forsøger at modgå marginalisering og udsathed i bestemte områder. Afhandlingen viser og analyserer, hvordan boligsocialt arbejde i Danmark kan ses som en række forskelligartede praksisser, som alle forsøger at forme måderne hvorpå folk *lever* i udsatte områder, det vil sige, hvordan boligsocialt arbejde forsøger at skabe "orderings of life".

Der eksisterer en del forskning som undersøger hvordan beboere oplever at bo i udsatte boligområder, som undersøger om interventioner i udsatte boligområder virker, samt forskning som undersøger de historier og diskurser som kredser om disse områder. Imidlertid findes der langt mindre forskning der undersøger boligsocialt arbejdes praksis. Af denne årsag fokuserer denne afhandling specifikt på *praksis*, og den bidrager med ny viden om hvordan vi kan forstå boligsocialt arbejde i Danmark.

Teoretisk trækker afhandlingen primært på aktør-netværks teori og Science and Technology Studies (STS), og empirisk er den baseret på ca. 216 timers deltagerobservation i tre boligsociale projekter, på 18 interviews med boligsociale medarbejdere, og syv interviews med beboere i forskellige områder. Det analytiske hovedfokus for såvel interviews som deltagerobservation har været boligsocialt arbejdes praksis med beboere, specielt indsatser der retter sig mod at fremme sundhed og skaffe folk i arbejde.

Afhandlingen består af fire artikler, som hver analyserer boligsocialt arbejde i Danmark, og hvordan dette arbejde forsøger skabe "orderings of life" i udsatte områder.

Artikel A, "Infrastructuring the social: Local community work, urban policy and marginalized residential areas in Denmark" (Udgivet i Environment and Planning A), viser hvordan både boligsocialt arbejdes planer, politikker og praksisser forsøger at infrastrukturere det sociale. Først fremanalyseres det hvordan politiske teknologier og boligsociale helhedsplaner udpeger bestemte områder som værende udsatte boligområder. Dernæst vises det, hvordan boligsocialt arbejde forsøger at skabe muligheder for at beboerne kan bevæge sig i nye retninger – både fysisk (fx ud af området) og i overført forstand (fx tættere på det, der karakteriserer det normale samfund, eksempelvis arbejde). Dette indebærer et arbejde med beboernes kapacitet for agens, således at de *selv* bliver ansvarlige for at foretage disse bevægelser. Til sidst argumenteres der for at boligsocialt arbejde indeholder vedvarende forsøg på at bevæge beboerne, således at selve området forandrer sig.

Artikel B, ”Making multiple responsibilities: On responsibilization and local community work in marginalized residential areas in Denmark” undersøger hvordan boligsocialt arbejde forsøger at ansvarliggøre beboerne i udsatte områder. Det vil sige, at artiklen viser hvordan boligsocialt arbejde forsøger at gøre beboerne ansvarlige – for sig selv, for deres boligområde, og for hinanden. Artiklen viser hvordan beboerne først og fremmest gøres ansvarlige gennem boligsociale medarbejderes praksisser med at beskrive beboere, fx i evalueringsdokumenter og på møder. Gennem disse beskrivelser defineres beboerne, deres problemer, og om de er ansvarlige eller ej. Efterfølgende viser artiklen hvordan ansvarliggørelse sker ved at distribuere ansvar mellem boligsociale medarbejdere og beboere. I visse tilfælde er de boligsociale medarbejdere ansvarlige *på vegne af* beboerne. Men disse processer er rodede og ofte skrøbelige. Overordnet viser artiklen, hvordan det at skabe ansvar aldrig er en entydig ting. At ansvarliggøre beboere er i stedet en multipel og gennemgående relationel opgave.

Artikel C, ”Making life liveable: Local community work between the state and the margin in Denmark”, viser hvordan boligsociale praksisser er fanget i en spænding mellem statens mål og de udsattes behov. Artiklen viser, hvordan boligsociale medarbejdere forsøger at gøre livet lettere at leve for mennesker i udsatte boligområder. Dette gøres ved at drage omsorg for udsatte beboeres komplekse (og somme tider simple) liv og problemstillinger. Artiklen viser videre, hvordan denne praktiske form for omsorg afhænger af boligsociale medarbejderes associationer til og dissociationer fra autoriteter (som fx kommunen), hvorigennem de kommer tæt på beboerne.

Artikel D, ”The multiplicity of problems in local community work: Bringing STS and social work together” analyserer hvordan problemer bliver specificeret og oversat igennem det boligsociale arbejdes praksisser. Artiklen trækker på den ”ontologiske vending” i STS og viser, hvordan problemer opstår fra boligsociale praksisser. Dette er karakteriseret af kontingens og ”bricolage”, samt af normativitet og former for viden. Artiklen bidrager hermed til en mere nuanceret forståelse af sociale problemer i socialt arbejde, og den bidrager til viden om relationerne mellem problemer og løsninger i STS.

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A third of my PhD has been spent abroad, first visiting the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) at Curtin University, Melbourne and visiting the Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London. The first stay was made possible by a grant from “Oticon Fonden”, while the second was made possible by the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science, who graciously awarded me an “Elite Research Travel Grant”. I am very grateful for these opportunities.

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Throughout the PhD process, I always envisioned – and looked forward to – writing these acknowledgements. Having written them, however, I realize that my debts of gratitude are greater than can ever be paid back in words.

This thesis is dedicated to four people. Firstly, to my parents, Niels Birk and Jytte Hoffmann Birk. Thank you, I owe you so very much. Secondly, to my grandmother, Ragnhild Helene Hoffmann Hellesøe, the importance of you in my life cannot be overstated, thank you for everything. Finally, the thesis is also dedicated to my friend and colleague Dan Nørgaard Laursen, who left this earth too soon. I hope you found peace and I miss you.

Rasmus Hoffmann Birk

Aalborg, June 2017.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

This thesis includes the following articles.

Article A

Hoffmann Birk, R. (2017). Infrastructuring the social: Local community work, urban policy and marginalized residential areas in Denmark, *Environment and Planning A*, 49(4), pp. 767-783.

Article B

Hoffmann Birk, R. (under review). Making multiple responsibilities: On responsibilization and local community work in marginalized residential areas in Denmark. (Under review in *The Sociological Review*).

Article C

Hoffmann Birk, R. (under review). Making life liveable: Local community work between the state and the margin in Denmark. (Under review in *The European Journal of Social Work*).

Article D

Hoffmann Birk, R. (submitted). The multiplicity of problems in local community work: Bringing STS and social work together. (Submitted to *Science, Technology & Human Values*).

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. ORDERING LIFE AT THE MARGINS

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and analyse local community work in marginalized residential areas in Denmark.

> Lina is a local community worker. She works in a local community project, Project N, in a marginalized residential area in the vicinity of Copenhagen. This local community project, like most other local community projects in Denmark, seeks to strengthen the knowledge, health and capacities of the residents living here. It also seeks to engage residents with local democracy, their local communities and the labour market. Project N is located in a common house in the middle of a low-rise residential area. It is sparsely furnished, and on its walls hang flyers and posters that detail local initiatives, events and offers for residents. Lina works alongside several other local community workers, but a big advantage for her is the fact that she speaks fluent Arabic.
>
> During the day, residents – often immigrants or refugees with a poor understanding of Danish – arrive at the common house, and most of the time, they wish to speak with Lina. When I conducted my participant observations in this project,[1] Lina told me that residents would often appear carrying plastic bags filled with unopened envelopes. Occasionally, these envelopes contain unpaid bills and invoices; sometimes they contain notices from the Danish Broadcasting Service informing the residents of their duty to pay the media license. Lina diligently helps residents. She translates the letters, explains the bills and invoices and calms people down, instructing them what to do. Her work, however, does not just involve translating letters. Lina and her colleagues often help local residents structure their finances and their shopping, sometimes teaching the residents about health, sometimes offering counselling and therapy to residents and sometimes helping residents get local jobs or apprenticeships. When I visited Project N as part of my fieldwork in local community work, the local community workers had recently started a project for women in the area, which was meant to teach the women about Danish society. As my informant Peter phrased it, "We just want to make people ready to get a better life for themselves".[2]

[1] See Chapter 4 for the methodology and methods of this thesis.

[2] All quotes from empirical materials and policy documents have been translated from Danish to English by the author.

The above description is derived from my empirical materials and depicts the object under investigation in this thesis, namely local community work in marginalized residential areas. Local community projects are initiated (see Chapter 2 for further details on this) to combat marginalization, unemployment, etc.; these are partnerships between the state, municipal authorities and the local non-profit housing associations.

The "mystery" at the heart of this thesis is how to understand this work. In the above description, a myriad of disparate and different activities can be noted. Lina and the local community workers assist residents in understanding their mail, helping them get employment and trying to give them a "better life for themselves". It is *life*, I argue in this thesis, which is central to local community work. Life is what is intervened upon; life is what is sought to be changed through these disparate activities.

> It is an afternoon in the spring of 2015. I am doing fieldwork in Project H, a local community project meant to help citizens in residential areas improve their health. It is a particularly slow afternoon with few residents showing up, so I end up small-talking with one of my informants, Paula, who is a local community worker. I ask her about local community work in the city in general and she tells me that the point of their work is "to create a life that lasts in the long run". The point is not, she tells me, to save people from themselves. People, she emphasises, have resources too, they are able to do things on their own. (excerpt from field notes)

Life, here, runs not just as an undercurrent through local community work, but is what the work is *about*. The point of local community work, according to Paula, is to create *a* life that *lasts*. Importantly, this work must respect the resources and agencies of people themselves. Local community work, in this way, is entangled with norms and knowledge; it is entangled with ideas about what it means to be a human being and what it means to live a normal life.

Thus, the question arises how we should understand this practice, if it is indeed entangled with life? One might be inclined to seek shelter underneath the umbrella of "governmentality studies" (e.g. Burchell, Gordon and Miller, 1991; Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996; Dean, 1999; Osborne and Rose, 1999; Rose, 1999; Huxley, 2008). When writing about *life* – especially in the context of various "helping professions" such as local community work and social work – the works of Michel Foucault and a series of predominately British and American writers comes to mind, with concepts of biopolitics or governmentality providing obvious analytical angles. For instance, in a recent article, Villadsen and Wahlberg (2015) have argued that the "government of life", today, is a "[…] core political problematic […]" (2015, p. 15). The government of life, as Villadsen and Wahlberg (2015) have defined it, refers to "[…] assemblages of knowledges and practices

which regulate, administer, optimize and strengthen the vital characteristics of man-as-living-being" (2015, p. 2). I do not wish to subtract from the importance of conducting such analyses, although I harbour scepticism about the productivity of continuously examining the oeuvre of Foucault to speak about the situations we are in today.[3]

Rather than pursue the path of the *government* of life, I argue in this thesis that local community work should be seen as a series of multiple practices that enact (and attempt to enact) *orderings of life*.

I draw the concept of *ordering* from the work of John Law (1994). Described very briefly, this concept stems from his ethnography of a scientific laboratory in England. He has described four distinct "modes of orderings", i.e. four ways in which *order* becomes imputed upon the networks of the social (Law, 1994, p. 83). According to Law, there is no such thing as *the* social order. Instead, Law has argued that there are multiple modes of *ordering*; there are multiple patterns and ways in which the social is consistently being shaped. Similarly, local community work embodies a "will to order". Policy goals of building capacities, reducing unemployment or fostering better social interactions all target perceived disorders of social life. Local community work, from its political goals to its often mundane activities is, I argue, fundamentally focused on trying to make people live their lives in different ways. However, I would argue, similar to Law, that local community work does not create *an order*, but is engaged in enacting multiple *orderings of life.* These processes of ordering, as I detail more thoroughly in Chapter 3, are precarious and on-going. Exactly because orderings are *performed*, they may also be performed differently and subsequently, they may fail. Fundamentally, this concept is useful for exploring local community work, because it emphasises how creating order is always precarious, processual and complex work, while simultaneously leaving the specific processes of ordering empirically open. That is, the concept of ordering presupposes that *orderings* happen, but how these orderings happen and what they result in, is left open to empirical exploration.

The practices of local community work can be analysed as part of "larger" projects of regulating or administering "man-as-living-being". Simultaneously, I would argue that seeing local community work *solely* as such a project overlooks the ways in which the practices are engaged in ordering or shaping *life-as-such* (Fassin, 2009). By this I mean the ways in which local community work is a project of ordering life as it is an on-going process of human becoming (Ingold, 2015). It is in the close attention to the practicalities of *a life* that local community work differs from the government *of* life. It is in the close and careful attention to the obstacles and difficulties that people encounter when undergoing *a* life that local community work differs from the government of life as *living-beings*. It is in the careful attention to the particularities of a life, undertaken over and over again, that local community work supersedes the optimization of capacities. Though, as we shall see, these two

[3] I write more about governmentality and Foucault in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Article A.

are often intertwined. Orderings of life, then, are the on-going, precarious efforts of attempting to shape, form or direct the lives lived in particular ways.[4]

Understanding how local community work enacts orderings of life is relevant for two reasons. As will be detailed further in Chapter 2, there is a dearth of research on local community work in Denmark. The existing research has focused only on, for instance, whether or not these interventions work, i.e. whether or not marginalized residential areas achieve a greater mixture of resourceful residents or whether the areas stay the same (e.g. Christensen, 2013, 2015). Other strands of research have focused on the marginalized residential areas, for instance whether or not it can be objectively stated that Denmark has "ghettos" (Schultz Larsen, 2011, 2014, see also Chapter 2 and Article A) or attempted to explain how marginalized residential areas become marginalized (e.g. Andersen, 2002b). Existing research has also focused on *either* the professionals (e.g. Fallov, 2006) *or* the residents (e.g. Qvotrup Jensen and Christensen, 2012), with a distinct prioritization of *documents* over participant observation. Thus, there is a gap within the previously conducted research in terms of understanding the practices of local community work as it unfolds over time, in concrete spaces and with residents. By focusing on how the practices of local community work enact orderings of life and analysing and describing local community work in novel ways, this thesis addresses this gap within the literature. Secondly, this thesis contributes to our understanding of intervening upon places and lives that are marginalized, interventions that are quite prevalent within a welfare state such as the Danish one. It is my argument, then, that understanding how local community work enacts orderings of life may also contribute to our understanding of how politics, knowledge and practice become configured together in processes of ordering and governance. That is,

Lastly, this PhD project is embedded within a larger research project called "Views on Human Beings in Social Work – Welfare Policies, Technologies and Knowledge of Human Beings". In this research project, we have examined how human beings are viewed within different social work practices, both local community work and social work with children and families, with the unemployed and with people with mental illnesses. A central interest is how views on human beings have developed in the interplay between policies, technologies, knowledge of human beings and social work practice. While I did participate in meetings, discussions and presentations in this research group throughout the thesis, what I present herein is my own work, which stands alone with its own specific interests.

[4] I specify this more in Chapter 3.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND STRUCTURE

The approach for this thesis is abductive (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012; Brinkmann, 2014). Due to the lack of specific research on local community work practices, I have had an interest in exploring, describing and understanding what specifically happens, when these projects are initiated in the attempt to counteract marginalization in specific residential areas.

The research question that guides this thesis is derived from my interviews with local community workers, my participant observations and my reading of both documents from the field and wider theoretical and empirical literature, and is as follows:

How do the practices of local community work enact orderings of life?

I explore this question through four empirical articles, which all specify and delineate both what these orderings of life *are* and how they are enacted through the practices of local community work.

This thesis proceeds in the following manner:

Chapter 2 further specifies the field of local community work, connecting it to Danish policies surrounding marginalized residential areas. This chapter also outlines four different kinds of ways in which marginalized residential areas and local community work have been analysed and understood, before finally discussing my take on the relevant literature.

In Chapter 3, I describe and discuss the two theoretical sensibilities of this thesis, which stem from actor-network theory and the wider field of Science and Technology Studies (Law, 1994, 2009, Latour, 1999c, 2005; Mol, 2010).

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological sensibilities and specific methods I used to conduct my study. This thesis is a multi-sited qualitative inquiry into local community work, consisting of participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

Subsequently, the following articles are included.

- Article A: *Infrastructuring the social: Local community work, urban policy and marginalized residential areas in Denmark*

The first article argues that a particular ordering life is enacted through the process of *infrastructuring the social*. The article develops this concept to describe how policies, plans and practices of local community work attempt to create new

relations and connections in marginalized residential areas in multiple ways. Drawing on actor-network theory and STS analyses of infrastructure (Simone, 2004; Larkin, 2013), the article first demonstrates how the policies and plans of local community work demarcate and delineate particular residential areas as "ghettos", opening them up for local community work and the circulation of different professionals within the area. From here, local community work attempts to create new types of relations and connections in the areas: between residents; between residents and local community workers; and between residents and various virtuous spheres of society. Thus, local community work attempts to make particular, normative trajectories possible and by attempting to make residents traverse these. These processes are what I call *infrastructuring the social*.

- Article B: *Making multiple responsibilities: On responsibilization and local community work in marginalized residential areas in Denmark*

The second article argues that ordering life can also be seen as the on-going, and rather precarious, attempts to make residents *responsible* for themselves and for their local areas. This article explicitly tackles the idea that governance functions through "responsibilization" (e.g. Rose, 1999), and presents the various ways in which such responsibility is put into practice. The article demonstrates, firstly, how local community workers create accounts that demonstrate both their competencies and responsibilities and how the residents' responsibilities are continuously made through narrative accounts and stories. Furthermore, the article argues that responsibility becomes distributed between local community workers and residents. In this way, it demonstrates how local community workers take *on* responsibility *for* residents. Furthermore, the article draws on empirical examples from encounters between local community workers and residents to demonstrate how the making of responsibility is always a multiple, and rather messy processes; people are caught up in multiple, overlapping, and sometimes, unclear relations of responsibility.

- Article C: *Making life liveable: Local community work between the state and the margin in Denmark*

The third article explores how local community work itself becomes configured in-between the state policies that initiate it and the needs of those on the margins. The article how local community workers continually perform this interstitial position by, when necessary, dissociating (Munro, 1999) from or associating to official state spaces. Through this interstitial position, local community workers are able to care for the lives of residents and attempt to unmake their positions on the margins. Thus, ordering life both involves the refolding of relations of authority through association and dissociation from spaces of authority, such as municipalities or the state. From the interstitial positions that result, local community workers can become entangled in the complex lives of residents and care for them. Here, ordering life is the

continuous processes through which local community workers both enact the interstice and use such interstitial positions to care for the lives of residents.

- Article D: *The multiplicity of problems in local community work: Bringing STS and social work together*

Lastly, my fourth article explores how problems and solutions become constituted through the practices of local community work. It draws on literatures within STS, especially the so-called "ontological turn" (e.g. Mol, 2002; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013) to argue that problems do not necessarily have pre-existing essences, but rather emerge *through* proposed solutions (Neyland and Milyaeva, 2016). Thus, local community projects are initiated as solutions to particular problems (such as urban marginality or ill health in particular areas), but rather than solve such problems in any simple way, these projects specify *new* kinds of problems. The process of specification and emergence of new problems involves both bricolage and contingency, and it challenges existing conceptions of complexity and simplicity in social work. In this article, the on-going specification of problems and possible solutions becomes one way of ordering life.

Each of these articles should be seen as exploring particular orderings of life. It is important to emphasise here, and as I will develop further in Chapter 3, is that these orderings of life are not *static*. They are *processes*, patterns of on-going activities. Local community workers did not create a stable "social infrastructure"; rather, in an on-going fashion, they attempted to infrastructure the social. The title of each article attempts to capture this processual character of ordering life.

The following display summarizes how the articles correspond to the research question, and the particular conception of both *ordering* and *life* that is presented in each article.

How do the practices of local community work enact orderings of life?			
	Activities of ordering	**Life is to be ordered as…**	**Ordering of life**
Article A	Designating particular areas as problematic, of making new connections and relations between residents, local community workers and various contexts (such as employment).	Agential and normative.	Infrastructuring the social – the on-going attempts to make new and normative relations, which may create new and agential trajectories of life

			for residents.
Article B	Accounting for, distributing and mediating resident responsibilities.	Responsible and orderly.	Multiple, distributed and fragile responsibilities.
Article C	Local community workers associate to and dissociate from spaces of authority, so as to generate positions from which they can care for the lives of residents.	Liveable and (potentially) less marginal.	Making life liveable through interstitial positions between the state and the margin.
Article D	Uses of lay knowledge, technologies and spaces to specify problems.	Lived in accordance with norms of health and sociality.	Making life emerge as problematic and open for interventions and solutions.

Following the four articles, Chapter 5 presents a concluding discussion. I here discuss the key concepts of ordering and life, and I summarize the overall argument made in this thesis.

CHAPTER 2. CONSTRUCTING THE FIELD AND REVIEWING THE LITERATURE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of this thesis, as laid out in the preceding chapter, is how local community work enacts orderings of life. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize this question more, by describing both the local community work and the research that concerns itself with this practice.

Local community work in Denmark is a conglomerate of practices and plans that seek to intervene upon marginalized residential areas in Denmark. This is a description in the abstract to which plenty more specificities can be added. Local community work intervenes in many different ways. I describe local community work as *local* because it seeks to intervene upon particular conceptions of problems in residential and urban areas. In Danish, this practice is known as "Boligsocialt arbejde". Literally translated, this means "housing social work", which is an awkward phrase that links local community work more to social work practices, than to its historical roots in traditions of community work and development (see Hermansen, 1985; Fallov, 2017). I chose "local community work" as a translation, both to signify this historical relation and to specify that this practice is tied to particular configurations of *the local*. Within local community work, the *local* most commonly refers to neighbourhoods or residential areas. It is exactly through this relation to the idea of the local, the community and the neighbourhood, that local community work differs from social work more broadly. If social work seeks to intervene upon social problems as they exist in society (Nissen, 2014), local community work seeks to intervene upon problems that are decidedly *local*, bound to particular places (most commonly places of the city).

In this way, local community work cannot be considered separately from its "object", namely the marginalized residential area, nor the political and societal processes that produce marginalized residential areas. While there is, to the best of my knowledge, almost no research that explores the specific practices of local community workers (as I have done in this thesis) a large amount of literature centres on the *city* and the existence and production of marginalized areas. Thus, after delineating local community work further, I describe and discuss relevant

aspects of urban studies,[5] which focus on understanding the existence of marginalized residential areas, exploring the lives people live in such areas and examining the effects of social interventions and urban policy.

2.2. LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK IN DENMARK

According to Fallov, the overall rationale of local community work can be described as one focused on developing the capacities of the areas, the residents and the professionals (Fallov, 2013, p. 486). I explore this governmentality-inspired analysis further in this chapter. For the present moment, however, her definition of local community work is useful. She defines local community work as a type of social work that targets specific local areas (Fallov, 2013, p. 487). However, the specificities of this work can vary. Occasionally, it targets an entire part of a city, while sometimes focusing on specific housing estates. Since they are geographically located in different areas, each local community project often has a different focus. Several projects, for instance, focus specifically on youths in the area (especially boys and young men) to ensure that they stay off the street, while other projects target the elderly, or the general health in the area (Fallov, 2013, p. 487). She has further argued that local community work differs from other types of social work in that its point of departure is exactly in geographic area, rather than the individual (Fallov, 2013, p. 488).

In Denmark, local community work began in the early 20th century in Copenhagen, when, inspired by the Settlement movement in England and Hull House in the US, Danish settlements were established (Laursen, 1997; Fallov, 2017). The current form of local community work, however, materialized in the mid-1990s. It was in this period that the idea of the Danish "ghetto" arose. In the early 1990s, several Danish cities and housing associations began arguing that some non-profit housing areas were becoming "ghettos", often due to an increased influx of immigrants and refugees (Diken, 1998, pp. 15–17; Mazanti, 2002). In response to this, "the Urban Committee" ("Byudvalget"), consisting of several Danish ministers and ministries, was formed. It was a ministerial taskforce that first included six ministers, but soon expanded to 12 (Diken, 1998, p. 18). As Diken has noted, the work of the Urban Committee revolved around the idea "[…] that physical concentration of immigrants and bad housing environments automatically resulted in social problems" (1998, p. 19). The societal and political concerns over the possible existence of the "ghetto" resulted in 30 proposals, which would renovate residential areas, promote integration into the labour market and education and promote social activities (Diken, 1998, p. 19). Central to this was, as Diken (1998) has vividly illustrated, a

[5] In this context, I see "urban studies" as a general umbrella term for the variety of studies, disciplines and theories that proclaim to be concerned with the urban and/or the city.

pervasive panic over immigrants and refugees living in these areas.[6] The Urban Committee uncovered 186 marginalized areas, 121 of which were areas of non-profit housing[7] (Uggerhøj, 1997, pp. 52–53).

Until the advent of the Urban Committee, Denmark had not had a coherent policy for marginalized urban areas (Andersen and Pløger, 2007, p. 1352; Fallov, 2013, p. 490). There had of course been various policies for the housing market, but the urban domain was the responsibility of local municipalities, their administrators and politicians and the non-profit housing associations. The inception of the Urban Committee was a significant historical moment because it was the first time particular residential areas became singled out and demarcated by a political and technical apparatus, a practice that continues today. It is further significant because the Urban Committee, despite the legitimate critiques aimed at the ideas of otherness that informed it, also marks the first time the Danish state initiated large-scale urban interventions. In other words, the Urban Committee was the first time there was a systematic and state-initiated attempt to use local community work to enact orderings of life. Since the creation of the Urban Committee, residential areas of non-profit housing have been targeted with two types of interventions:

1) Physical renovations of the non-profit housing areas. Many areas were built in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and had suffered from poor workmanship and political neglect (see e.g. Schultz Larsen, 2014). These physical renovations have, for instance, consisted of refurbishing apartments, improving the facades of buildings and improving local infrastructure, such as pathways and roads (Ministry of Housing Urban and Rural affairs, 2014; Madsen and Kristensen, 2015).
2) *Social* interventions. These sought to re-connect people to the labour market, teach people Danish, create social activities, revitalize social networks, etc. Furthermore, the social interventions also consisted of policies to limit the number of people on benefits and with criminal sentences in marginalized residential areas.

It should be mentioned that the physical renovations were, and are, provided the most funding. However, the social interventions consisted of local community work

[6] The demarcation of these supposedly problematic and marginalized residential areas has, ever since, been incorporated into debates over immigration and "Danish-ness". A great deal of the literature focuses on analysing and critiquing Danish immigration policies (e.g. Mouritsen and Olsen, 2011; Johansen, 2013; Mouritsen, 2013; Hellström and Hervik, 2014). Thus, in this thesis, I focus on local community work as it not *just* intervenes in the lives of "immigrants", but in the lives of those living in marginalized residential areas.

[7] Today, local community work only happens within areas of non-profit housing.

and of a series of policy-tools that would, for instance, limit the number of people on benefits (and eventually, people with criminal sentences) in the areas.

Both the social and the physical interventions have the overarching logic of "social mix", which is the idea that a "mix" of residents from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds improves the neighbourhood (see e.g. Galster, 2007; Bricocoli and Cucca, 2014; Nast and Blokland, 2014; Galster and Friedrichs, 2015). As a policy official stated an interview, the idea is to "[…] spread the liver pâté more evenly across the bread" (Interview, Tim). This could be accomplished by, for instance, renovating areas to make them more attractive to people with more cultural and economic capital or by limiting the number of people on unemployment benefits who can be referred to an area. Social mix is discussed later in this chapter and in Article A.

Local community work is structured by so-called Local Revitalization Plans.[8] For local community work to happen, a Local Revitalization Plan must be drafted and approved by the local municipality, the housing association and "Landsbyggefonden".[9] Each plan must be made according to specific criteria, among these so-called *focus areas* for the activities. These plans and focus areas function as what Callon has called "Obligatory Passage Points" (Callon, 1986; Hoffmann Birk, 2017). If there is no Local Revitalization Plan, or if the plan does not follow the pre-defined criteria set by the Ministry of Housing and Landsbyggefonden, then no local community project can begin. In this sense, local community projects must pass through these plans. When I started this thesis in the summer of 2014, there were almost 100 Local Revitalization Plans[10] across Denmark. Most plans, however, emphasise different activities. From 2011-2014, there were seven different "focus areas" which Local Revitalization Plans had to incorporate and thus, the local community projects had to focus on. The following table illustrates the focuses and examples of activities (based on Sønderby, 2014):[11]

[8] In Danish, "Boligsociale Helhedsplaner" is "Social Housing Work Master Plans". I have chosen the term Local Revitalization Plans since it has been used in previous work (Open Society Foundations, 2014) and because it resonates with the wider literature on urban and local revitalization (e.g. Fraser and Kick, 2014)

[9] This is a central organization for the non-profit housing sector.

[10] In 2017, there were 84 Local Revitalization Plans that structured and designated activities, spanning 42 municipalities.

[11] In 2015, a new series of focus areas were published. I chose to reproduce the former here, as these were my point of departure for the empirical work.

Examples of activities within local community work, 2011-2014.

Focus areas	**Children, youths and families**	**Marginalized groups**	**Education, employment and business**	**Resident networks, participation and democracy**
Examples of activities	Spare time job consultants Prevention of arson	Social landlords Financial counselling	Job and education counselling	Neighbour-hood Moms Reduction of noise Council of young people
Focus areas	**Culture and leisure time**	**Health**	**Image and communicat ion**	
Examples of activities	Children's culture festival Bee keeping	Exercise for women Health workshop	Audiowalks Memory workshop	

This table exemplifies the plethora of activities that occur within local community work, ranging from activities focused on providing jobs for young marginalized people ("spare time job consultants") to those that seek to educate residents in bee keeping (to promote environmentalism in general). This is just a limited example of the disparity.

Within actor-network theory, Annemarie Mol and John Law (1994) have argued that "the social" does not have a single spatiality, but that it may rather be performed as multiple spatial types (Mol and Law, 1994). Useful for my purposes here is their distinction between *regions*, which have clear boundaries, and *networks*, which participate in drawing up such boundaries (for instance, through tools of measurements) (Mol and Law, 1994; see also Law and Mol, 2001).

Local community work can here be seen as the result of a heterogeneous network (Latour, 1996b, 2005) of political actors, ministries, plans, housing associations, statistics, newspapers, reports, etc. This network *traces and inscribes* (Latour, 1996b, p. 372) particular areas *as* marginalized and *as in need of* local community projects. Therefore, local community projects are the effects of this network. However, this network is not just in the "here and now", but traces back to the Urban Committee. The preoccupation with demarcating particular residential areas as problematic – starting from the Urban Committee and continuing through the "Ghettolist"[12] and Local Revitalization Plans – is an example of one network that enacts multiple *regions* of marginalization. Thus, this network enacts new meanings about the pre-existing housing estates (Guggenheim, 2016). It delineates particular regions of reality – the marginalized residential area – and opens it up for interventions (Osborne and Rose, 2004; Dikeç, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). This network does not literally conjure buildings out of thin air, yet insofar as buildings are "mutable immobiles" (Guggenheim, 2016), it does imbue these with new meaning. This point is similar to that of urban sociologists, who have indicated that the bad reputation of some areas contributes to the "self-perpetuating processes" that makes marginalized residential areas, marginalized (Andersen, 2002a, 2002b, 2003). Therefore, one way of understanding local community work is as the result of a heterogeneous network. Other networks, however, also exist. For instance, there is an entire field – mainly consisting of academics – that evaluates local community work, holds conferences about local community work (and marginalized residential areas), writes newspaper articles and publishes academic articles and books on this topic.[13] These networks, then, provide local community work a regionalized reality, participate in enacting local community projects in marginalized residential areas, for instance through demarcating that an area *is* marginalized (e.g. by looking at statistics), and by initiating local community projects as a solution to this identified marginalization. Local community work, in brief, is produced by these networks, through which different *regions* are simultaneously enacted, as local community projects are initiated in different residential areas. Thus, we may see local community work as both a *network* and as *multiple regions*.

The concept of the network is not perfect however. It under-emphasises (see Article A and Chapter 3) the normative and teleological purposes of local community work. In other words, the concept of the network under-emphasises the fact that local community work, no matter its topology, attempts to engender new orderings of life.

[12] The "Ghettolist" lists all current "ghettos" in Denmark based on criteria of ethnicity, unemployment, income, crime and level of education. I describe and analyse the list in detail in Article A, hence I merely mention it in this chapter.

[13] This thesis, of course, belongs in this network as well.

As previously presented, local community work focuses on several different areas. However, there are three types of activities central to local community projects, which are the activities that focus on health, on employment and education and on sociality.

From 2011-2014, *health*[14] was a pertinent and popular theme in many Local Revitalization Plans. This priority ran parallel to a long-standing political interest in Denmark in helping people become responsible for their own health (Frandsen and Triantafillou, 2011, p. 210). For instance, in the autumn of 2014, a report (Kommunernes Landsforening and BL - Danmarks almene boliger, 2014) was published about the importance of coordinating health and employment activities within marginalized residential areas. This report argues strongly for a wider focus on coordinating health and employment within local community projects. For instance, the preface of the report states:

> "There are very many resources present in the marginalized residential areas, but there are also great challenges to solve. Among them is the low employment amongst residents, and the health of the residents, which is distinctly worse than in the general population. Both health and employment are essential for the wellbeing of the individual human being […]" (Kommunernes Landsforening and BL - Danmarks almene boliger, 2014, p. 3).

This quote illustrates how the orientation towards health is intertwined with employment, and more fundamentally, how it is associated with considerations about *life*.

Secondly, as Fallov (2010, 2011a) has also noted, local community work strongly targets "employability". This means that local community work seeks to strengthen people's capacities for employment, for instance through education. In this endeavour, there is a focus on activities that seek to find "spare time" jobs for residents (often young people in the area) or in the collaborations between municipalities and local community projects, wherein employees from local job centres spend time in the project trying to help local residents get jobs.

Finally, local community work activities all centre on ideas of the social, especially *community*[15] (Fallov, 2010). Thus, these activities focus on generating feelings of

[14] As of the writing of this thesis, health is no longer part of the official focus areas for local community work. However, both employment and education are an official focus, as well as areas such as "wellbeing" and "crime prevention", e.g. sociality is still a theme. Furthermore, 33 Local Revitalization Plans still incorporate activities that focus on health (*Boligsocialt Danmarkskort [Map of local community work in Denmark]*, 2017)

[15] See also Article A.

togetherness and seek to both promote good relations between groups of residents and combat, for instance, loneliness or crime. While sociality is a rather disparate focus, it is what these activities target.

In summary, local community work activities all centre on particular ideas of the good life and life in the local area. They seek to restore unhealthy, unsocial and unemployed lives and enact orderings of life. Yet *how* this happens is, as I demonstrate in the next section, is much less illuminated. That is, very little work has explored or described local community work *in practice.*

2.3. MARGINALIZED RESIDENTIAL AREAS, LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK AND THE URBAN

In the following, I describe four different kinds of research on marginalized residential areas in Denmark. First, the critical sociological research, which is occupied with understanding the nature of marginalized areas, including how they occur. Secondly, research that focuses on the lives of residents in these areas. Thirdly, research that focuses on the interventions that have been executed since the 1990s, and whether or not these work. Fourthly, I describe and criticize the governmentality-inspired literature that views the city and urban policy as a question of *governance*. These distinctions are, of course, not concrete, but are meant to provide an overview of a complex and heterogeneous field.[16]

"GHETTOS" AND PROCESSES OF SEGREGATION

The rhetoric of the "ghetto" has permeated Danish politics since the 1990s (Thomsen, 1994; Diken, 1998; Mazanti, 2002). In 1994, it was debated whether there were "ghettos" in Denmark, and, with the annual publication of the "Ghettolist" (since 2010), this term has since become a very common term in Danish political discourse and newspapers with regard to marginalized residential areas and immigrants. However, the idea that there are "ghettos" in Denmark has also been criticized (Schultz Larsen, 2011; Glerup Aner, 2015).

Explicitly departing from the work of the urban sociologist Loïc Wacquant, Schultz Larsen has argued that while the Danish "ghetto" may well be sanctioned by the state bureaucracy (Schultz Larsen, 2011, p. 48), its "social reality" (as he terms it) is

[16] There is, of course, a wealth of urban studies I exclude; for instance, work on belonging (Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen, 2013), on climate projects and urban planning (Blok and Meilvang, 2015) and on space (Tonboe, 1993). I further exclude discussions about the nature of the urban, including contemporary urban developments (Farías and Bender, 2010; Farías, 2011; Wachsmuth, Madden and Brenner, 2011; Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Storper and Scott, 2016).

less clear. Schultz Larsen (2011) has thus attempted to empirically test the notion of the Danish "ghetto". For Wacquant, the ghetto[17] comprises four elements: stigma, socio-economic limitations, a spatial demarcation and a lack of institutions and the state (Wacquant, 2000, p. 383). For him, the ghetto is "[…] a spatial implement of ethnoracial closure and control resulting from the reciprocal assignation of a stigmatised category that paradoxically offers the tainted population a structural harbour fostering self-organisation and collective protection against brute domination" (Wacquant, 2016, p. 1080). Building on this, Schultz Larsen has argued that while particular areas in Denmark may be called "ghettos", they are not actually ghettos in Wacquant's specific sense of the concept.

Resident turnover is significant within most marginalized residential areas in Denmark, whereas the opposite is true within American ghettos (Schultz Larsen, 2011, p. 61). Moreover, neither public institutions nor the state are missing from Danish areas (Schultz Larsen, 2011, p. 62). Indeed, residential areas in Denmark, even if they are marginalized, are – as we have seen – consistently intervened upon and associated with the state and the local municipalities (I develop this point further in Article C).

Furthermore, Schultz Larsen doubts that the stigma attached to these areas in a Danish context can be compared to the American stigma, a claim that, despite the lack of evidence cited, seems reasonable. Finally, Schultz Larsen has noted that these areas are not characterized by ethnic homogeneity (unlike the ghettos in the US), but are rather heterogenic, and he has thus concluded that the notion of the "ghetto" is highly problematic as a point of departure for Danish politics, and participates in stigmatizing residents and areas (Schultz Larsen, 2011).

Other studies have focused on explaining *why* particular residential areas become excluded or marginalized. For instance, Schultz Larsen has argued that Copenhagen's "West End" ("Vestegnen") is stigmatized and marginalized due to the political creation of an unequal housing market, which "[…] concentrated people from the lower rungs of the social space in nonprofit [sic] housing estates" (Schultz Larsen, 2014, p. 1400). Similarly, Andersen (2002a, 2002b) has argued that marginalized residential areas in Denmark are marginalized because of self-perpetuating processes in which both "exterior processes" (such as the area's reputation) and "interior processes" (e.g. vandalism) feed into one another, through

[17] Whenever I use "ghetto" in quotation marks, I imply the Danish, politicized term. When I use it in this section without quotation marks, I refer to Wacquant's concept; he very clearly argues that ghettos are actual phenomena – but not in Denmark (see Wacquant, 2016, p. 1086, note 6).

which the socio-economic segregation that characterizes particular neighbourhoods is strengthened, and people with resources move away (Andersen, 2002b, p. 166).[18]

LIVING IN MARGINALIZED RESIDENTIAL AREAS

A second strand of research has focused more specifically on the lives and experiences of people in marginalized residential areas. Again in accordance with Wacquant, Qvotrup Jensen and Christensen (2012) have explored territorial stigmatization in the marginalized residential area of Aalborg East. Territorial stigmatization is the idea that the demarcation of a particular territory as, for example, a "ghetto", means that the social bonds in these areas dissolve, that people dis-identify with their neighbourhoods or that people feel that they are worth less (Wacquant, 2007; Qvotrup Jensen and Christensen, 2012, p. 76). However, Qvotrup Jensen and Christensen's findings are less definitive than Wacquant's thesis would suggest. While they have identified territorial stigmatization through Danish politics and the media, residents are more ambivalent, expressing both positive and negative feelings (Qvotrup Jensen and Christensen, 2012, p. 88). This indicates that while the theoretical frameworks provided by Wacquant contribute to the knowledge of marginalized residential areas in Denmark, Wacquant's ideas cannot be transferred uniformly to other contexts (see Small, 2007, for a similar point).

Other researchers have also contributed to the exploration of residents' lives in marginalized residential areas. For instance, Johansen (2013) has conducted an anthropological study of the Gellerup, demonstrating how refugee families experience and manage welfare state interventions. Ladekjær Larsen (2010) has explored initiatives of health-promotion in multi-ethnic areas, primarily through the perspective of participant observation, and Mazanti (2002) interviewed residents in a marginalized residential area about how they experienced, characterized and used the place they live.[19] Among other things, Mazanti has concluded that several place identities co-exist (Mazanti, 2002, p. 199).

SOCIAL MIX AND INTERVENTIONS

A third strand of research has focused on the idea of social mix and the efficacy of interventions in marginalized residential areas. It is perhaps this literature which most closely directly studies local community work. For instance, Christensen (2013, 2015) has explored the *effects* of the interventions initiated between 1994 and

[18] Related to this is a large international research on neighbourhood effects, i.e. whether or not neighbourhoods affect the life chances of people and, if this is the case, why. For an overview, see Harding and Blokland (2014, pp. 160–166)

[19] Mazanti (2002) has also conducted a thorough theoretical synthesis focused on "place", and she has also described and analysed existing policies and plans.

1998 (the initiatives of the Urban Committee) in creating social mix.[20] One of her conclusions is that interventions in marginalized residential areas in Denmark which attempt to create a more heterogeneous population of residents, *fail*. Christensen has concluded that "the analysis shows that area-based intervention does not lead to increased social mix, whether social mix is measured as educational mix, employment mix, income mix nor ethnic mix" (Christensen, 2015, p. 269). She has further concluded that "resourceful" residents leave the area, while more vulnerable residents move in. She criticizes, much like Schultz Larsen, the Danish housing policies for neglecting the structural causes that segregate the Danish housing market (Christensen, 2015, pp. 269–270).

Thus, the segregation of people with lower incomes and those who are unemployed reflect the Danish housing market, which fundamentally favours people with a high degree of economic capital. For many people, then, there are no options *but* to live in non-profit housing areas, simply because these are affordable. As long as these dynamics persist, it is arguable that interventions which seek to produce greater social mix will fail. A report published in 2016 came to a similar conclusion. This report has argued that marginalized residential areas have neither gotten better nor worse over the last 30 years, at least when measured according to the criteria of the current "Ghettolist", (i.e. unemployment, education, criminal sentences, income and non-western ethnicity). These areas *still* have the greatest share of these issues, which has not changed over the last 30 years (Kraks Fond, 2016).

Existing research thus demonstrates that there seems to be meagre large-scale effects of local community work and similar interventions, especially with regard to creating social mix. As Christensen has argued (2013, p. 20), area-based interventions *cannot* change the structural causes that produce segregation, yet they *can* have marginal effects on individual residents (Christensen, 2013, p. 20). Thus, despite the lack of measurable effects, we cannot say that there have been no consequences of such initiatives or that they have completely failed. This has also been emphasised by the researchers of the previous report, who have said that they can observe individual effects of the interventions, yet again, the individuals who benefited from local community work tend to move out of the areas (Staghøj, 2016). As I also detail in Article A, the very idea that social mix is a *good* in and of itself can be questioned. Mixing people together does not necessarily produce harmony or less conflict (DeFilippis and Fraser, 2010; Tonkiss, 2013), and the ambition of producing social mix must also be seen as an artefact of political choices and rationalities, rather than the perfect solution for spatially concentrated marginalization.

[20] Article A provides a more thorough introduction of the uses of social mix and social capital in Danish urban policy.

URBAN POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

A popular analytical approach to understanding both the urban and the problem of marginalized residential areas (in Denmark as well as internationally) focuses on analysing urban policy. Urban policy is an extremely heterogeneous and complex field, but one useful definition comes from Edwards and Imrie, who have defined it as "[a] function of governing that may occur through government and non-governmental organisations or a combination thereof. Urban policy seeks to respond to social, economic, ecological and political problems in situ or that relate, first and foremost, to particular places" (Edwards and Imrie, 2015, p. 43). This formulation is useful insofar as it distinguishes between *governing* and (the) *government*. This means that urban policy is a particular form of governing, and that this governing is not necessarily conducted by state institutions (see also Fraser, Bazuin and Hornberger, 2015). Secondly, it demonstrates that local community work is describable as urban policy insofar as it targets social problems in particular places.

The urban policy research is, much like urban policy itself, heterogeneous and broad. One influential inspiration, however, has been Michel Foucault, his British and American interpreters and their writings on government and governance. Within the literature on governmentality, government is understood, not as a reified notion of the state, but as the rationalities and technologies through which human behaviour becomes *directed* and guided (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde, 2006, p. 83).

As Rose, O'Malley and Valverde have stated, drawing on Foucault: "To govern […] whether to govern a household, a ship, or a population, it was necessary to know that which was to be governed, and to govern in the light of that knowledge" (2006, p. 87). Governmentality is the "conduct of conduct" (Bevir, 2010, p. 423), it is the "art of governing", the discussions about *how* people should be governed *in light of* the knowledge about them that emerges (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde, 2006, p. 84; Huxley, 2008). The focus on the *art* of governing has been important in the neo-Foucauldian[21] analyses. Thus, Rose has distinguished governmentality from "sociologies of governance" (Rose, 1999, p. 19). Sociologies of governance, in Rose's description, are concerned with the exploration of "[…] the *actual* operation of the complex exchanges through which governance occurs" (Rose, 1999, p. 17, my emphasis). Conversely, Rose has argued that the analyses of governmentalities empirically examine the:

[21] Woolgar and Neyland (2013) categorise these writers under the term "neo-Foucauldians", which I, for lack of a better term, shall use in this thesis as well (fully aware that most neo-Foucauldians would no doubt balk at the term).

> "[…] emergence of particular 'regimes of truth' concerning the conduct of conduct, ways of speaking truth, persons authorized to speak truths, ways of enacting truths and the cost of so doing. […] the invention and assemblage of particular apparatuses and devices for exercising power and intervening upon particular problems" (Rose, 1999, p. 19).

The purpose of governmentality is not to describe, but to diagnose "[…] an array of lines of thought, of will, of invention, of programmes and failures, of acts and counter-acts" (Rose, 1999, p. 21). As should be clear from this quote, Rose's presentation of governmentality is similar to Foucault with regard to the focus on *thought* ("art") over *acts*.

These analytics have proven extremely influential, not just within urban policy, but widely within the social sciences (e.g. Walters, 2012). In the following, I delineate several examples of how governmentality has been used to understand urban policy.

Drawing on governmentality, Dikeç (2007) has demonstrated how, in France, urban policymakers have attempted to address the same areas for decades, but that these areas have been imagined and conceptualized in different ways, both spatially and discursively (Dikeç, 2007, p. 286). Throughout the years, neighbourhoods have been selected for interventions in a more and more centralized manner, becoming "[…] more precisely defined objects of intervention […]" (Dikeç, 2007, p. 286). Dikeç has argued that the spaces of urban policy are not *given*, but the *outcome* of governmental practices (Dikeç, 2007, p. 287). I agree with this conclusion, which resonates with the Danish policies. Without wishing to detract from the value of such analyses, I believe they also need more clarification. For instance, questions of *what actually happens* in these interventions *because of* the changes in space are ignored in Dikeç's analysis. This lack of practical specificity is a general trend within governmentality analyses.

In the UK, Raco and Imrie (2000) have drawn on Rose (1996b) and the rest of the governmentality literature (e.g. Rose and Miller, 1992; Dean, 1999) to argue that the forms of urban policy that emerged in the 1990s were oriented towards making people – both individuals and communities – responsible for their own government. Analysing the policies of "New Labour" in the mid-to-late 1990s, they have argued that these urban policies "[…] represent a transformation of subjectivity from passive to active citizenship where self-governing capacities are mobilised so that governance is conducted in and through the governed […]" (Raco and Imrie, 2000, p. 2196). This argument is congruent with Rose's conclusion that governance has shifted from an idea of an all-encompassing social towards communities (Rose, 1996b).

Similarly, McKee and Flint have drawn on Foucault and neo-Foucauldian thought to analyse the British social housing sector. Flint has argued that social housing tenants in the UK are governed as rational consumers *and* as responsible members of

communities (Flint, 2003, see also 2004a, 2004b). Here, tenants "[…] are to shape their conduct in relation to normative standards of behaviour, achieved through technologies that consistently reassert shared 'community' values and expectations" (Flint, 2003, p. 623). While Flint's writings are limited due to his focus on policies and documents, McKee has explored how residents may also resist the strategies of governance. She has described how policies of social housing in Scotland shifted towards promoting the responsibilities of the residents, and more importantly, seeking to *empower* them through making them directly active in the management of their housing (McKee, 2011, p. 6). Based on focus group interviews with residents, McKee problematizes the idea that such rationalities of government are taken on by residents in a straightforward manner. Instead, this is ambiguous, since while residents did not *mind* the idea of being empowered, their notion of empowerment differed from the governmental one (McKee, 2011, p. 14). This has led McKee to conclude that: "whilst the analysis of discursive strategies is important, so to [sic] is a consideration of how these practices have been interpreted, implemented and experienced from below" (McKee, 2011, p. 15). In this way, McKee has discovered a central weakness of governmentality inspired analyses, namely that their lack of focus on the practices of governance means that they become too "smooth" (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013, p. 27), too general. Such analyses, as multiple authors have indicated (e.g. Lippert and Stenson, 2010; Brady, 2014) can incorporate further local empirical specification to avoid generalizations (see especially Collier, 2009, 2012). As I will demonstrate in the second article of this thesis (Article B), it is far from certain that strategies and rationalities of governance actually become internalized and effectualized in practice. This does not, of course, mean that we should *not* learn from governmentality analyses, just that these analyses have their limitations.

With regard to Denmark, Fallov has drawn on governmentality to analyse local community work. Firstly, she has argued that local community work, through a pervasive focus on (re)generating "social capital" (See also Article A) and through changing the "social mix" within local areas (often through physical renovations) attempts to form a subject that is social in new (and normative) ways (Fallov, 2013, pp. 496–497). Secondly, local community work focuses on creating a subject that *participates*, i.e. residents are not merely social in specific ways, but are also included as participants in debates and the development of the neighbourhood (Fallov, 2013, pp. 499–500). To provide one brief example, Local Revitalization Plans are supposed to be created with the input of various local residents. In this way, local community work in Denmark attempts to motivate people to participate actively in their own governance.

Thirdly, she has noted that local community work attempts to create an affective subject. This ambition emerges in projects that seek to make young people channel "negative" energies into "positive" and socially accepted endeavours (Fallov, 2013, p. 503). Some local community projects have thus experimented with using hip hop

as a legitimate creative and energetic output for young people in the local area (Vejleåparken Local Revitalization Plan, 2013)**.** Fallov has further argued that urban policies in Denmark attempt to create an affective subject with a specific emotional and affective attachment who belongs to their local area; thus, urban policies attempt to cultivate feelings of safety and local pride (Fallov, 2013, p. 503). This approach, of course, can be criticized insofar as it prioritizes and valorises "Danish" values, and insofar as social and economic problems and marginalization are solved through "affects" rather than more substantive approaches (Fallov, 2013, p. 504). Through Fallov's descriptions, we may then see local community work, as an instance of governance, seeking to form certain subjects and subjectivities. This governance occurs specifically through the *local* and *the community* (Rose, 1996b, 1999).

To summarise, throughout Western urban policies the notion of building capacities and communities has been prevalent for decades (Marinetto, 2003; Craig, 2007; Fallov, 2010). This often involves delegating responsibilities to people in local communities (Rose, 1996b; Flint, 2004a). Therefore, rather than being dependent on the welfare state, people are governed by their own communities (Rose, 1996b), they participate in local democracy and are "reconnected" to virtuous spheres of society (Osborne and Rose, 1999; Fallov, 2010, 2011b), such as employment. Furthermore, in both Denmark and France, urban policies allow interventions (Dikeç, 2006a, 2006b, 2007): these policies define and delineate particular neighbourhoods as problematic, justifying particular interventions (see also Article A).

This section is not an exhaustive list of urban policy analyses or of the studies that draw on governmentality. My point has rather been to argue that these are prevalent perspectives, which provide us with an important foundation for understanding the logics and rationalities of contemporary urban policy and governance of marginalized residential areas.

2.4. TOWARDS AN INQUIRY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK

In the preceding sections, I described four different approaches to marginalized residential areas. I chose these because each of them informs us, if partially, about local community work. In summary, marginalized residential areas have been conceptualized as areas that are neglected and stigmatized by the state; life in marginalized residential areas is the potential borderland between the state and the margin (Johansen, 2013) and contains more ambivalent, almost defensive, stances towards the state's demarcation (e.g. Qvotrup Jensen and Christensen, 2012). Local community work comprises urban policies that seek to engender social mixing (and fails) (e.g. Christensen, 2015), or as instances of *governmentality*, seeks to rebuild and retrain the capacities of residents, create new affects for them and re-integrate

them into society (Fallov, 2010). Local community work is intertwined with the state insofar as it is initiated because of political and state ambitions to demarcate and intervene in particular places. These are all illuminating, important perspectives. Fundamentally, local community work is a practice that can be seen from all of these perspectives. Thus, local community work arises from the political identification of particular areas as problematic; it becomes entangled with the production of marginalized residential areas; it is itself a policy that can be evaluated; and it tries to engender greater satisfaction with the neighbourhood.

There are two different epistemological approaches in the outlined research. Firstly, there is the position wherein the marginalized residential area has a social reality which can be uncovered, and which may or may not match the writings, definitions and policies of bureaucrats and politicians. Local residents may have perspectives that differ from the official classifications; marginality is *made* through societal and structural mechanisms that can be (objectively) uncovered and policies can be evaluated in terms of their effects and results. This is a critical realist stance in which sociological phenomena have *distinct qualities* and *causal autonomy* (see Karakayali, 2015, pp. 735–737)

In the governmentality inspired policy approaches, such critical realism is foregone in favour of approaching the intents, the strategies and the discourses that are layered within the texts. It is not, Rose emphasises, a hermeneutic analysis (1999, p. 56). Genealogies of government are best described as constructivist[22] approaches where the emphasis is on establishing "[…] the singularity of particular strategies within a field of relations of truth, power and subjectivity by means of a work on symptoms" (Rose, 1999, p. 57). In other words, these analyses explore how the world is being made and remade through policies, plans and, above all, *thought*.

A problem with the critical realist approach is that the *work* that policies do is eschewed in favour of evaluating whether or not they "fit" with the social realities of the areas or whether the policies work according to their own criteria. This approach means that less attention is paid to the small, mundane effects of policies, or the practical work that goes into instantiating and materializing such policies.

In the governmentality approach, however, it appears to me that *too much* attention is paid to policies and plans. Lea, in her anthropological examination of welfare interventions and bureaucracy in Australia's Northern Territory, has conducted a provocative analysis of this. She has argued that governmentality analyses tend to attribute effects and agencies to policies in a way that obscure and obfuscate the conditions of the production of policy (p.19). She has asserted that:

[22] Although Rose prefers the term "diagnostic" (see Rose, 1999, pp. 55–60).

> "Policies act, they have political effects: they transform and transfigure […] they use words strategically and intentionally to regulate and circumscribe the options of others. We might give this faith in disembodied analyses of governmentality – in which the objects have become subjects and the subjects have become objects – an anthropological name: policy animism" (Lea, 2008, p. 19).

While I do not entirely agree that exploring the effects of policies is akin to "[…] endowing them with an affective dimension […]" (Lea, 2008, p. 19), I do think that Lea has a point that a lot of policy-focused analyses *obscure* the (sometimes) contingent, messy, or strange conditions of production that goes into policy. In local community work, as I detail in Article B, multiple accounts are constantly made to evaluate and demonstrate the competencies and responsibilities of local community workers. However, in this process of account-making, both its messy and contingent circumstances of production and the specificities of including people's lives are transformed and hidden from view. While Lea's diatribe against "policy animism" is problematic for its over-emphasis on policy and intervention as fundamentally *human* and *embodied* (thus neglecting the actual roles that policy documents surely *can* play), it usefully reminds us that policies are also caught up in messy and practical circumstances of production.

Furthermore, while the governmentality analyses have been influential and important, they have two other significant limitations. Firstly, such analyses often neglect the importance of materiality and things (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde, 2006; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013). Secondly, as Brady (2014) has observed, the often genealogical approach to texts in governmentality studies means that multiplicity, complexity and everyday activities can be bracketed out of the analysis (Brady, 2014, pp. 13–14). Such textual analyses neglect questions of *how* governance becomes accomplished (or not accomplished) and it neglects what is at stake in these processes (Fassin, 2009). Local community work, I argue, should neither be understood as an issue of critical realism, nor as a "policy animist" case of governmentality. By leaving aside the critical realist questions about the reality of marginalized residential areas and the effects of policies, as well as the logics, rationalities and strategies embedded in documents, I seek instead to approach local community work as the enactment of orderings of life.

In the preceding sections I have argued that local community work can be seen both as a heterogeneous network of actors and as multiple regions of practices all centred on marginalized residential areas. Central here are activities that seek to improve the health of residents, improve the employment and education of residents and improve the ways in which residents are *social*. Therefore, it can be seen that local community work contains multiple activities that target the lives of residents; yet *how* such work unfolds is much less described. By focusing on the practices of local community work, it is my ambition to treat local community work as a subject matter *in-itself*, rather than the by-product of "larger" policies or societal

developments. I do so, *inter alia*, by focusing on what *goes on* within local community work, and the (often messy) circumstances through which it becomes carried out and attempts to effectuate change.[23] The following chapter outlines the theoretical sensibilities of this thesis, focusing especially on the concept of orderings of life and how we may specifically understand this, vis-à-vis the literature I have reviewed in this chapter.

[23] This does not mean, as will become evident in the articles, that I do not focus on policies. As Article A demonstrates, however, my focus is more on how policies are *materialized* and how they are (or are not) conducted through day-to-day, situated activities.

CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL SENSIBILITIES

Theoretically, this thesis draws from actor-network theory[24] and Science and Technology Studies (STS). I write "draws from" very deliberately here. Rather than adhere strictly to some form of formalized theoretical framework, I have instead a set of theoretical *sensibilities* that primarily emerge from actor-network theory and STS. The notion of sensibilities is inspired by Neyland (2008), who writes about ethnographic sensibilities for research. By sensibility, he refers to a stance which is in-between formalized and strict rules of procedure and complete improvisation or incoherence (Neyland, 2008, p. 11). In this thesis then, my theoretical sensibilities are in-between formalized frameworks of theory and complete improvisation. This is similar to actor-network theory and STS, in which less emphasis is placed on theoretical fidelity and more emphasis on theoretical *development*. As Mol has aptly stated, actor-network theory:

> "[…] is not a "theory", or, if it is, then a "theory" does not necessarily offer a coherent framework, but may as well be an adaptable, open repository. A list of terms. A set of sensitivities. The strength of [actor-network theory], then, is not that it is solid, but rather that it is adaptable. […]" (Mol, 2010, p. 265)

Thus, this thesis is *not* a strict "actor-network theoretical" thesis (if such a thing exists). Instead, I have drawn theoretical sensibilities from actor-network theory, sensibilities which foreground particular interests – especially ordering, practice and sociomateriality – while eschewing others (for instance, the role of power). By foregrounding a focus on practice, these sensibilities allow me to go beyond the critical sociological perspective on marginalized residential areas and urban policy, on the one hand, and governmentality studies on the other. These theoretical sensibilities, as my articles reveal, have allowed me to attend to local community work in ways that are theoretically and analytically novel within this field.

The theoretical sensibilities, as discussed below, have not been in place in that form throughout the entire process of this PhD. While I have had a general interest in the

[24] The idea of actor-network theory as a stable and unified theoretical framework has been debated (e.g. Latour, 1999b) and it has been argued that there are now multiple post-ANTs (Gad and Bruun Jensen, 2010). Rather than be impeded by terminological debates in this thesis, I use the term "actor-network theory" (and STS) to suggest that I draw widely from actor-network theory, both "classical" (see Michael, 2017) and "post" (Gad and Bruun Jensen, 2010).

orderings of life and in practice, I have also honed and specified these concepts in my encounters with the empirical materials.

3.1. SENSIBILITY ONE: ORDERING

The first theoretical sensibility of this thesis is a shift from notions of *government* and *governance* to *ordering*. As previously mentioned, I employ the concept of ordering from the work of Law (1994), who was concerned with the organization and "modes of ordering" within a scientific laboratory. His study was theoretically inspired by actor-network theory (still rather new at the time), symbolic interactionism and a Foucauldian conception of *discourse* (Law, 1994, pp. 21–25). I believe that Law's notion of "modes of ordering" is useful for my purposes insofar that he, like me, was attempting to surpass hegemonic stories and ideas of order. Thus, he shifted from the idea of *order* as a singular, stabilized, and reified entity, to an emphasis on *ordering*. Orders, for Law, are "[…] more or less precarious and partial accomplishments that may be overturned" (Law, 1994, pp. 1–2). In the shift from the noun to the verb, he sought to capture this, and it is this focus on the accomplishment of order and the *precariousness* of accomplishing orders that I have found beneficial. This is because, as can be seen in the preceding chapter, only a limited amount of work focuses on what actually occurs *in* local community work and how it happens.

Shifting to *ordering* also helps me avoid the inflationary tendencies of governmentality and neo-Foucauldian approaches (Collier, 2009, p. 97). Rose, O'Malley and Valverde (2006, p. 97) have themselves identified this problem, namely that notions of "neoliberalism" or "advanced liberalism" (e.g. Rose, 1999) are exceedingly general concepts under which almost every activity, technique, technology or rationality can be categorized (Collier, 2009, 2012). As Collier has aptly noted, the identification of, for instance, technologies of responsibilization, are usually taken to imply "[…] that we are dealing with a neoliberal 'whole' – a total logic of power relations in society (though with certain 'local' specifications and modifications)" (Collier, 2009, pp. 97–98). Like Collier, I find this framework unsatisfactory because of this tendency to use diagnostics that are so flexible that they can be used to explain everything. If everything can be accorded as an instance of neoliberalism, then such a category loses its explanatory value. Furthermore, as Woolgar and Neyland (2013, p. 27) have indicated (and as I explain in Article A and Article B), governmentality also presupposes that the logics of government are "taken on" by subjects, something which I argue is not necessarily true.

My thesis represents a switch from the vocabularies of governmentality to those of actor-network theory and ordering, because I want to emphasise the precariousness and the difficulties of ordering, as well as the practices of ordering.

To return to the concept of "modes of ordering", Law has argued for the existence of multiple, incomplete processes of ordering (Law, 1994, p. 2). Orderings are *performed*, and they are performed through heterogeneous materials, such as technologies, objects, people, strategies and policies. They are performed through stories and accounts, as well (Law, 1994, p. 20). The social, for Law, is never "pure". It does not just consist of people (see also Latour, 1996a), it is heterogeneous, multiple and partial, rather than purified and singular (Law, 1994, p. 5). Modes of ordering are:

> "[…] *fairly regular patterns that may be usefully imputed for certain purposes to the recursive networks of the social*. In other words, they are recurring patterns embodied within, witnessed by, generated in and reproduced as part of the ordering of human and non-human relations" (1994, p. 83, emphasis in original).

Thus, it becomes necessary to determine of what are these patterns. In my interpretation of Law, they are the patterns of the heterogeneous relations that comprise, what he calls, the "recursive networks of the social" (the subsequent section explains why the notion of the network is problematic). These are patterns of relations and activities that are, in an on-going fashion, being generated and reshaped.

As mentioned, this idea has a Foucauldian legacy. Law views modes of ordering as "[…] in many ways […] like Michel Foucault's discourses: they are *forms of strategic arranging that are intentional but do not necessarily have a subject* […]" (1994, p. 21, emphasis in original). Therefore, the question of who orders is left open. There is no cohesive, strategic, masterminding subject behind the ordering, trying to enact it. Law has further attempted to surpass the Foucauldian notion of discourse, because it is "[…] often synchronic: the same non-subjective strategies instantiate themselves again and again […]" (1994, p. 21). For Law then, the problem is that the Foucauldian discourses are often already in place; that they reproduce themselves. The Foucauldian approach, for Law, does not "[…] tell stories about how they might come to perform themselves differently – how they might come to *reshape* themselves in new embodiments or instantiations" (1994, p. 22, emphasis in original). I have no desire to debate whether or not Law's interpretation of Foucault is correct. However, his argument does preface a later argument, targeted against not just Foucault, but also the neo-Foucauldians. Here, the argument has become that discourse and subjectification produces itself everywhere – the world is littered, it seems, with neoliberal, psychologized (Rose, 1996a), entrepreneurial and responsibilized (Rose, 1999; Ilcan and Basok, 2004) subjects (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013, p. 27). As Woolgar and Neyland have incisively noted however, these neo-Foucauldian analyses neglect "[…] ordinary, non-creative, and not very motivated messiness [and] governance beyond notions of freedom and rationales […]" (2013, p. 28). In their critique, then, neo-Foucauldian notions of governmentality do not really allow for mess and contingency. Woolgar

and Neyland, like Law, have emphasised the fact that Foucauldian and neo-Foucauldian analytics neglect the messes and practicalities of governance and discourse.

For Law, orderings are "[…] patterns or regularities that may be imputed to the particulars that make up the recursive and generative networks of the social. They are nowhere else" (Law, 1994, p. 83). This is an important aspect, because Law here accounts for the idea that these modes of ordering are not just to be found in the empirical, excavated and viewed objectively by the analyst, but are rather a way of interpreting and understanding the on-going flows of actions and activities. Importantly, orderings are always connected to the (empirical) *particulars.* Orderings, for Law (as for me), are not "outside" the networks of the social; rather, they are folded within them – they are particular forms or regularities being imputed onto the social, yet simultaneously they are activities *of* the social. Orderings are nowhere *but* within the recursive and generative networks of the social.

This, then, is the first theoretical sensibility of my thesis: a switch from notions of governance (inspired by governmentality studies that focus on texts, arts, discourse and mentalities) to a notion of *ordering* (as a processual, partial, material-semiotic imputation of particular patterns upon what Law calls the networks of the social) (1994). Whereas Law sees orderings as imputed upon the networks of the social, I use the term *practices*, which I explain further in the following section.

Whereas Law speaks of "modes of ordering", I prefer the notion of "orderings of life". I do this, because I have different concerns than Law. Orderings may, in principle, be of anything. They may be of laboratory practices, of nature and culture, of the climate, of governance, of social work, etc. I am not interested in all practices of local community work. Instead, I am interested in those practices that attempt to make people live differently. I am interested in those activities which, as we saw in Chapter 2, attempt to help people find employment, engender particular forms of sociality or make people healthy. When I concern myself with orderings of *life*, I thus mean those practices that concern themselves with the conditions of human living, broadly speaking. This raises the pernicious and difficult question of how to think about *life*.

In this thesis, I draw my way of thinking about life from the anthropologists Didier Fassin and Tim Ingold. Fassin's work provides a useful way in which to consider the connections between ordering, governance and *life*. Fassin has argued in support of focusing on the *stakes* of life (Fassin, 2009). In an analysis of Foucault and biopolitics, he has argued that:

> "Neither life as *bios* nor life as *zoe* was [Foucault's] main concern, but rather the way in which impersonal 'living beings' were turned into populations and individuals, how governmentality and subjectification

> shaped our modern vision of the world and of humanity" (Fassin, 2009, p. 47, emphasis in original).

Fassin has instead argued for an anthropological approach to the question of "life as such", understood as the:

> "[…] course of events which occurs from birth to death, which can be shortened by political or structural violence, which can be prolonged by health and social policies, which gives place to cultural interpretations and moral decisions, which may be told or written - life which is lived through a body (not only through cells) and as a society (not only as a species)" (Fassin, 2009, p. 48).

The anthropological project to which Fassin is referring is, quite obviously, much larger and more thorough than my intention with this thesis. Nevertheless, his ideas here are instructive as they highlight the difference between the project I have undertaken and the approaches of governmentality or biopolitics. In these approaches, life is the conduct of the living being, whose potentials must be maximized and whose conduct must be directed. Fassin, however, has questioned how life might also be approached as something which is experiential, precarious, *at stake* (Fassin, 2009). Fassin thus directs our attention to the fact that life is not just being *conceptualized* in practices of governance, but that it is fundamentally *at stake* in these processes as well; life may be curtailed or prolonged, made easier or more difficult. In addition to Fassin, Tim Ingold's thorough anthropological and philosophical analyses of life are also useful here (Ingold, 2008, 2011, 2015). Briefly, (I return to this in Chapter 5) Ingold views life as *on-going movements*, rather than closures. For him, life fundamentally always *escapes* from that which tries to "box" it in (Ingold, 2008, p. 1809). This formulation is useful as it juxtaposes ambitions of ordering and governance with the recalcitrance and unpredictability of life. As my articles clarify, orderings of life do not *determine* people's course of life, but attempt to shape its trajectories.

Thus, in this thesis, life refers to the on-going movements of persons, not just of impersonal living beings, and it is not merely conceptualized or "viewed", but fundamentally *at stake* in processes of ordering.

Orderings of life, then, are the patterns of activities that seek to order or affect the on-going movements undertaken by human beings entwined with materials and things. Orderings of life are attempts to shape – to *order* – human becoming (Ingold, 2011, 2015). And entwined with this are, of course, ideas and knowledge about what it means to live and how people *should* live. Both ordering and life are discussed further in Chapter 5.

3.2. SENSIBILITY TWO: PRACTICE

The second theoretical sensibility of this thesis is *practice*. If orderings of life are the strategic, non-subjective patterns of activities that seek to direct human becomings, then it is necessary to reflect upon what exactly is being patterned. Whereas Law has suggested the recursive networks of the social, I want to suggest that *practices* are being patterned in ways that enact orderings of life.

Before delving more fully into practice, I need to pre-empt a later analytical point (from Article A). Law has written (1994) about relations between modes of ordering and the recursive networks of the social, in which he mirrors the early versions of actor-network theory, wherein the concept of the network was central. It was posed as an alternative to notions of institutions or organizations, meant to eschew both the Cartesian divide of the body and the mind, as well as the divide between Nature and Culture (Latour, 1993). Bruno Latour has written:

> "Put too simply, [actor-network theory] is a change of metaphors to describe essences: instead of surfaces one gets filaments (or rhyzomes in Deleuze's parlance Deleuze/Guattari 1980)). More precisely, it is a change of topology. Instead of thinking in surfaces – two dimensions – or spheres – three dimensions – one is asked to think in terms of nodes that have *as many dimensions* as they have connections" (Latour, 1996b, p. 370, emphasis in original).

Since the early developments of actor-network theory, the concept of the network became contested. Mol and Law have questioned, for instance, what other topological figures could be used to conduct analyses (Mol and Law, 1994). They have argued that rather than everything in the world being organized in networks, perhaps other topologies would also be enacted (for instance, regions or fluids). Thus, they have shifted the idea of the network as a dominant meta-physical concept to one among several (Mol and Law, 1994; see also Law and Mol, 2001; Law, 2002). Other critiques have focused on the apparent lack of hierarchy (Hetherington and Law, 2000); if a network has no centre, nor structure, then one must question how to conceive of norms and hierarchies (for more detail, see Article A). The network was criticized in this way based on what it neglected and obscured. In this thesis, I agree largely with these points – the concept of the "network" appears inadequate to describe the relations between local community workers and residents, as these are hierarchical.

My second problem with the network is that it was also a concept which my *informants used*. They spoke of generating networks and the importance of networks. Thus, the idea of network moved from a purely analytical concept to an empirical one; something that I encountered. For this reason, it became important not to conflate "my" actor-network theoretical conception of networks with *their* conceptions of networks. Indeed, clinging to the notion of the network would

potentially obscure my ability to understand, and write about, what exactly it meant when my informants attempted to "network". I attempted to deal with this in my first article, which discusses ways of infrastructuring (as opposed to networking) the social. This attempted to move beyond both the notion of the network in the highly specialized ANT-sense and the language of my informants. It adds an interpretive, analytical layer.[25]

Therefore, following especially Mol, I regard *practice* as a conceptualization of that which is being patterned, formed and ordered. For Mol, the study of practice "[…] does not search for knowledge in subjects who have it in their minds and may talk about it. Instead, it locates knowledge primarily in activities, events, buildings, instruments, procedures and so on" (Mol, 2002, p. 32). This formulation is useful insofar as it invokes a sense of practice *as that which goes on*. In practices, all entities may have the same ontological footing. Words, cells, buildings and so forth may participate in the doing (Mol, 1999, 2002, pp. 25–26). Realities are being made, Mol has argued, in practices; indeed, they emerge *from* practices (see also Article D). Mol has mobilized an extremely open-ended definition of practice. It is a definition which would be rather mundane, if not for the radical ideas that *realities* emerge from practices and that multiple kinds of entities (humans, non-humans) are part of practices (Mol, 1999, 2002).

A much more thorough, but arguably also problematic, definition is derived from practice theory, specifically the work of Schatzki.[26] Very briefly summarized, Schatzki (2012) views practices as "[…] open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings […]" (Schatzki, 2012, p. 14). Activities (doings and sayings) form nexuses by "hanging together" (Schatzki, 2012, p. 15); they are also "[…] bound up with material entities" (Schatzki, 2012, p. 16) and dependent on material arrangements (Schatzki, 2012, p. 16). Furthermore, practices have "teleoaffective structures", which for Schatzki, entail normative teleological hierarchies, i.e. the goals and purposes that are normatively acceptable in a practice (Schatzki, 2012, p. 16).

[25] My informants' ambition and practical efforts of *making networks* can be seen as *ordering*. Thus, the relation between their practice and the network is that the practice is used to generate networks within the social, while the network is a particular *ordering*. However, specifically because this language is rather convoluted, I have used the concept of infrastructuring instead. When a sociological theory becomes the property of one's informants, it fundamentally cannot be a resource for explanation, but rather something to be explained (Law, 1994, p. 138)

[26] There are many practice theorists and variants of practice theory. Schatzki is a significant influence in this field, though he is by no means the only one; see, for instance, the work of Nicolini (2011, 2013).

Whereas the actor-network theoretical approach to practice, as represented by Mol, has a rather "agnostic" approach to practice (leaving it more or less up to the researcher), practice theory engages in a very specific philosophical specification of the world that precedes the empirical. Practice theory pre-defines the ontologies and hierarchies of entities, for instance by arguing that sayings are necessarily a "subclass" of doings (Schatzki, 2012, p. 15). I find this problematic, and slightly armchairish, potentially constraining our sociological and analytical imaginations (Mills, 2000). Might we not, for instance, think of cases wherein sayings are *not* a "subclass" of doings? Might there be activities that are not doings or sayings, but rather "undergoings", and passively part of practices? For instance, Gomart and Hennion's work (1999) has demonstrated how people allow themselves to undergo particular experiences, such as listening to music or taking drugs. To *do* such activities also requires that one *undergoes* particular experiences (see also Latour, 1999a; Hoffmann Birk, 2016). Put differently, the notion of doings is useful, so long as it does not enact an overly binary conception of agency as either *passive* or *active*. As Latour has argued, we are in dire need of words that emphasise the middle ground between passivity and activity (Latour, 1999a). My point here is that the patient *undergoing* therapy can also be part of practice, yet the focus on *doings* risks obscuring this, exactly because we can be part of practices through our *undergoings*. Furthermore, to pre-empt my later empirical analyses, instances where local community workers attempt to teach residents new things and where residents potentially undergo new experiences and where agencies become distributed (Article B) can also be considered part of practice.

I ask these questions not in search of answers, nor to dismantle practice theory, but rather to show why I find it too constraining. The various iterations of practice theory have a tendency to create a quite thorough theoretical vocabulary (for another example, see Nicolini, 2011). This is not necessarily problematic, but this thesis I have preferred the room for eclectic theorization and creativity which actor-network theory and STS provides. Despite these reservations, Schatzki's notions of practices (as consisting of doings and sayings) is useful, as is the emphasis on the teleological orientation of practices (Schatzki, 2002, 2012). The idea that practices consist of *doings* and *sayings* is arguably similar to Mol's formulations that everything, from words to people and paperwork, participate practically in making events happen (2002, pp. 25–26) (as long as the distributed agency or passivity does not become neglected). However, their hierarchical structure needs to be an empirical question, rather than a meta-physical one.

In this thesis, *practice* is perceived as locally situated activities, including (but not necessarily limited to) doings, sayings, undergoings and translations (Latour, 2005). Practices may be teleologically organized, although this is a question to be answered empirically and analytically, rather than a priori. Thus, I take a rather open approach to the concept of practice, considering it to be useful since it invokes locally situated activities and allows for these locally situated activities to involve relations of

power, knowledge and norms. Furthermore, practice is *material-semiotic* in its mixture and reshuffling of relations, typically thought of as belonging to separate ontological realms (see Law, 2009). For Mol, practices are also always sociomaterial, fleshy and bodily, as explained in the following:

> "Who does the doing? Events are made to happen by several people and lots of things. Words participate, too. Paperwork. Rooms, buildings. The insurance system. An endless list of heterogeneous elements that can either be highlighted or left in the background, depending on the character and purpose of the description" (Mol, 2002, pp. 25–26).

Thus, practice is not something made solely by people, but processes in which an entire series of heterogeneous actors participate. Law has a similar interest, which he has termed "relational materialism" (Law, 1994, p. 23), which is the idea that "the social" does not comprise "social stuff" (on the social as a type of material, see Latour, 2005), but is actually materially heterogeneous: "[…] *the social is almost never purely social*" (Law, 1994, p. 139, emphasis in original). There is a substantial portion of literature on the importance of materials, from anthropological approaches (e.g. Sjørslev, 2013) to psychological (e.g. Tanggaard, 2013; Brinkmann, 2016; Hoffmann Birk, 2016) to sociological (e.g. Law and Mol, 1995; Law and Urry, 2004; Latour, 2005; Law, 2008, 2009) and organizational (e.g. Orlikowski, 2007). It is helpful to emphasise how practices are *material-semiotic* (Law, 2009), because doing so addresses two gaps in the existing literature.

First, despite the early influence of Latour, governmentality studies have only rarely engaged with the materiality and objects of governance (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde, 2006, p. 93; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013, p. 29). Woolgar and Neyland (2013) have eloquently demonstrated how governance is often entangled with mundane objects, such as water bottles (in airports), speed cameras and bin bags (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013). They have indicated how objects can both *be governed* and how objects also become constituted *through* governance, in ways that are quite often unpredictable and prone to failure (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013). The neglect of materials within governmentality studies, thus, is problematic because governance quite clearly involves the deployment of things and technologies (see also Barry, 2001, 2013). For this reason, it is necessary to pay attention to non-human actors to understand *ordering*s, precisely because orderings involve materials, things and technologies.

Secondly, social work literature – including local community work – has consistently under-emphasised the "paraphernalia" of practice (Scholar, 2016). Consequently, little attention has been paid to the materials and things that partake in social work practices (with some exceptions, e.g. Jensen, 2001a, 2001b, Høybye-Mortensen, 2015a, 2015b, Ferguson, 2016a, 2016b). The objects in social work are not as obvious as in medicine or in scientific laboratories, but this does not mean that they are not *there*. Høybye-Mortensen has studied social workers in Denmark,

and their uses of objects. She has argued that the objects – or artefacts, as she calls them – do indeed play a part within social work practices. Social workers, for instance, use them to demonstrate authority (Høybye-Mortensen, 2015b). Thus, objects become used by humans in social work. Similarly, Ferguson has incisively criticized the lack of attention to spatiality, movement and embodiment in social work; demonstrating how child protection services, for instance, depend on bodies, rooms, movements and *cars* (Ferguson, 2010, 2016a)

Human interactions, as Latour (1996a) has argued, are always framed by materials – we can close doors, send emails, drive cars, write letters: we can engage with materiality. Simultaneously, materiality also always engages with us. To be human is to be linked to networks of materials, to be formed by these and to be affected by them. To be a body, Latour has argued (2004a), is to learn to be affected. Objects, technologies and materials distort and translate our actions (Gomart and Hennion, 1999; Latour, 1999a, 2004a; Hoffmann Birk, 2016).

In both my methodological approach (see Chapter 4) and in my articles, materials play a role. For instance, Article A demonstrates how local infrastructures (such as a lack of buses) may disrupt efforts to help people find employment. Here, materiality manifests as recalcitrance. In Article B, materiality is subtler, yet the practices are not any less heterogeneous. This article reveals how local community workers create accounts through documents and schemas, in which their own activities and the lives of residents become crystallized, frozen and aggregated, so as to demonstrate accountability, competence and responsibility (see Article B for a more complete description and analysis). This is a material-semiotic process in which lived activities[27] become translated into accounts and documents that can be printed, emailed, copied and noted on; materiality and meaning are entangled.

Things, or materiality, in the analyses in this thesis thus play different parts: for instance, as that which resists or disrupts particular orderings, or as the outcome (the document) of material-semiotic processes of translations. In the articles, my ambitions have been to attend to constellations of and translations between human and non-human actors.

In summary, my second theoretical sensibility is that orderings of life are enacted through materially and socially heterogeneous practices. These practices are locally situated activities of doings, sayings, undergoings and translations.

[27] After Article B has been both submitted and revised and re-submitted, I arrived at strikingly similar description to the work of Law (2004), who has shown how employees in the Daresbury laboratory complain that "life" does not fall neatly into spreadsheets (Law, 2004, p. 106).

3.3. SENSIBILITIES, NOT A FRAMEWORK: A SUMMARY

I have delineated two theoretical sensibilities, upon which I draw in lieu of an overarching *framework*. My study is abductive (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012, see also Chapter 4, section 4.6) and my theoretical sensibilities have *guided* my abductive study, including my fieldwork and analytical processes. Indeed, from the onset of my work on this thesis, I have been interested in ordering, in practice and in the role of objects. While these theoretical sensibilities *guide* my work, they have not been firmly in place from the beginning of this thesis. Rather, they became honed and specified through my analytical work.

Overall, I consider orderings of life to be the strategic (but non-subjective) attempts to pattern practices to shape human becomings (Ingold, 2015). These processes are precarious; they are on-going. They presume a "flat ontology" (see Harman, 2009), i.e. they presume that there are no pre-existing ontological hierarchies. This is not to say that "power", "social structures" or hierarchies do not exist, but that the social may be *ordered* in such a way that it is not flat (although the starting point of inquiry is to presume that the social is flat) (Latour, 2005). Thus, orderings of life are attempts to pattern practices to shape human lives. Orderings of life are exactly attempts to make particular *orders* or *structures* emerge. Importantly, this is a sociomaterial process. Things are used in processes of ordering, but they also shape these very orderings. Each of my articles emphasises and includes both practice and things in the analysis. Taken as a whole, they demonstrate particular orderings of life that are enacted through the heterogeneous practices of local community work.

These sensibilities have provided me with a way of thinking about local community work that surpasses traditional sociological perspectives. They have allowed me, as the articles show, to focus on the practices of local community work, and subsequently, allowed me to make an original contribution to the existing research literature. In other words, they have enabled me to be sensitive and open towards the practices of local community workers, rather than using pre-existing explanations.

The following chapter discusses the methodology and methods of this thesis. I return to the notion of orderings of life again after the articles, in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes and discusses the empirical design and methods of this thesis. To study how local community work enacts orderings of life, I utilised a qualitative approach, which focused on the practices of local community workers in three different local community projects. The methods of the study consist of semi-structured interviews and participant observations.

Firstly, I discuss several methodological considerations about how to study local community work, how to study orderings of life and how to study practice. Subsequently, I reflect upon the design of the inquiry, including my choice of empirical sites. I then describe the empirical materials, the process of gaining access and my ethical considerations. This is followed by a section concerning interviews and participant observations, and finally, my analytical strategy.

4.2. METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

As outlined in Chapter 3, I had an on-going empirical and analytical interest in understanding how local community work enacts orderings of life. Methodologically, however, I focused primarily on *practices* of local community work to create an understanding of how orderings are enacted. As noted in the previous section, in this thesis, practice is considered the locally situated activities of doings, sayings, undergoings and translations. Practice also comprises not only human actors, but non-human ones as well. While the notion of practice has been used widely within actor-network theory and other writings, specific reflections about methods and methodologies are more difficult to find (Blok, 2010a; Gad and Bruun Jensen, 2010). However, several methodological strategies *can* be found in actor-network theoretical writings.

Firstly, Mol has suggested that one can listen to informants as if they were their own ethnographers (Mol, 2002, p. 15). By this she means that what people *say* does not simply convey *meaning*, but also conveys how particular things are handled in practice. In her case, "[…] how living with an impaired body is *done* in practice" (Mol, 2002, p. 15, her emphasis). Her argument is that asking people consistently about the activities they may take for granted "[…] incites them to not get stuck in relating their own opinions, but to take a fresh look at their own practices" (Heuts and Mol, 2013, p. 128). Thus, this was my first methodological strategy: to ask people what they concretely, actively *did*. I pursued this particularly through my

interviews, wherein I would ask people how they conducted their daily work (I detail my interviews more thoroughly toward the end of this chapter**)**.

My second methodological strategy originates from the Latourian slogan: *following the actors* (Latour, 2005, p. 12). In such an endeavour, following is not just a metaphor, but also an activity of movement. It means that one should:

> "[…] try to catch up with [the actors'] often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish" (Latour, 2005, p. 12).

However, the question of how to follow local community work is less clear. As I described earlier (Chapter 2, section 2.2), local community work is both a heterogeneous and distributed network (involving, for instance, conferences, local housing associations, ministries and municipalities) *and* multiple "regional" practices. Following the actors, then, can quickly mean that one must move between various localities, tracing documents, statements and key actors to understand how local community work crystallizes into a network.

The notion of following specific actors and relations no matter how they multiply or where they go, has the consequence of producing specific types of accounts that often focus on charting or mapping heterogeneous networks (Blok, 2010b). For my purposes, however, mapping out the networks of local community work would be an inadequate approach to fully understand the immersed and situated processes of local community work, because local community work contains a duality; it consists of multiple situated practices that are entangled with particular spaces and places and their transformation, *and* it is a diverse network of policies, organizations and plans that enable these situated practices.

Lists and plans, as presented in Article A, *localize* local community projects in particular spaces, with a transformational purpose: that which is designated as "marginalized" or as "ghetto" must change. In this sense, following the actors of local community work indiscriminately, especially as they *multiply* (Latour, 2005, p. 227), would mean that I would lose out on the urban, material and *local* aspects of local community work.

Farías and Blok (2016) have captured this problem in their work on urban cosmopolitics. They have argued that the study of the urban exactly requires one to "[…] 'stay put' at the intersection between networks and regions, assemblages and sites, in order to observe how urban realities are assembled and disassembled, to grasp how sites mediate between multiple urban assemblages, to study co-existence in action" (Farías and Blok, 2016, p. 12). Local community work, similarly, exists

both as a network and as multiple regions, and the study of local community work thus presupposes activities of staying *put*.

In this study, I both attempted to follow my informants and simultaneously, stay put. I attended to their reasoning, their methods and their activities, rather than pre-defining what is went on. However, I also "stayed put" and focused on specific *sites* of local community work, while also following projects *of* local community work. A more thorough strategy of following the actors would, most likely, have removed me from the practices of local community work that I wanted to study (and, for instance, focusing more on the local municipalities or the residents). Thus, I was immersed, over long periods of time, in sites of local community work to study how it attempts to transform and order "regions", i.e. marginalized residential areas. To understand how local community work enacts orderings of life, it was thus necessary with some degree of immersion into practice, something that will not come about without "staying put". This is not unheard of within actor-network theory; for example, the work of Latour and Woolgar (1986), Law (1994), Mol (2002) and Latour (2009) all contain a degree of situated immersion in a particular site, rather than following the many trajectories leading out of these sites. My second methodological strategy can thus be said both to follow the actors in their work and reasoning, (rather than pre-define them) and simultaneously staying put within their situated practices.

4.3. DESIGN AND CHOICE OF SITES

At the time I designed my study, local community work was distributed across almost 100 marginalized residential areas of varying sizes. It was – and still is – conducted across multiple projects and organizations and instantiated within countless documents, such as the Local Revitalization Plans and policies.

To understand how this disparate field enacts orderings of life, I designed my study as a multi-sited fieldwork (Marcus, 1995). Local community work is the field, in which there are four sites. My methods used for generating empirical materials are participant observation and qualitative interviews. Moreover, I conducted a semi-structured collection and reading of documents from the field, especially Local Revitalization Plans and various organizational documents from within my sites. This occurred between December 2014 and January 2016.

Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 229) has argued that cases should always be chosen for the purpose of helping the researcher obtain the greatest amount of information about the object being studied; in my case, the orderings of life. Since I was interested in the orderings of life from the beginning of this project, I chose to focus on activities within local community work that would conceivably be exemplary of such work. As demonstrated earlier (Chapter 2, section 2.2), local community work focuses on three dimensions of life: life as *employed* (or in education), life as *healthy* and life as *social*. Since the majority of local community projects focus on sociality and

employment, I chose to focus on projects that also conducted health-related activities. My reasoning was that such projects might provide the most information about how local community work enacts orderings of life. The first project I visited – Project H – specifically focused on health-related activities, while the other projects contained activities that focused on both health, employment and sociality.

Furthermore, since my project was part of a larger research project, my specific sites were also chosen because they fulfilled two other criteria. Within this project, we desired to cover a reasonably representative range of types of local community projects, both in terms of the activities of the projects, as well as in the size and location of the projects. Thus, two of my projects were based in Jutland, while one was based outside Copenhagen. In terms of size, they range from reasonably small projects to larger projects.

The first three of my sites were local community projects, situated in three different cities, spanning six marginalized residential areas. Furthermore, I visited one local community work conference about health and employment, one workshop about health in marginalized residential areas, one "after-work" meeting about local community work and I interviewed one consultant, who worked in a central organization. These activities comprise my fourth "site", which consists of various activities related to local community work, rather than being bound to particular marginalized residential areas or a specific project.

4.4. EMPIRICAL MATERIALS

The following table provides an overview of the empirical materials and sites for this thesis.

Overview of empirical materials.

Days of observation	**Hours**	**No. of interviews with local community workers**	**No. of interviews (residents)**
Site 1 – Project H			
15	44	5	0
Site 2 – Project N			
25	147	10	5

Site 3 – Project D			
7	11.5	2	2
Site 4 – General local community activities			
3	14	1 (consultant)	0
Total			
47	216.5	18	7

In the above table, every time I turned on my recorder and conducted a conversation with an individual is considered an interview. These conversations varied with respect to degree of formality. Mostly, these interviews were prepared well in advance, but on one occasion at my first site and on three occasions at my second, I took the opportunity to conduct informal interviews with my informants. All recorded interviews were also transcribed verbatim, either by myself or by student assistants.

Some local community workers were interviewed multiple times (I detail my interviews more thoroughly later in the chapter). At my first site this had practical reasons; the interview with the manager was interrupted and thus, rescheduled. At my second site, some informants were also interviewed several times, but for slightly different reasons. Two months after the fieldwork, I returned to conduct follow-up interviews. I interviewed Lina again, this time more formally, structured by an interview-guide rather than improvised. On this occasion, I also conducted a second interview with Liza, who had been my gatekeeper, and whom I had interviewed on my first day in the field.

In total, I conducted 18 different interviews with 15 local community workers, including one strategic interview with a consultant who worked in an organization in the field of non-profit housing. Furthermore, I also conducted participant observations across all fields.

Finally, I also collected documents (such as Local Revitalization Plans and policy-documents) throughout the entire study. When I conducted fieldwork, I also collected several reports that my informants had written about their work or documents they had given to their informants. However, there was no separate document analysis. These documents primarily served as a supplement to the interviews and participant observations and helped me learn more about local community work.

CONDUCTING THE STUDY AND GAINING ACCESS

My first foray into the field came through Project H, which focused on health inequalities in marginalized residential areas. After reading about the project in a report and online, I contacted the manager for an interview, which turned into a half-day of participant observation in the project that afternoon. At this time, the manager explained to me that the project sought to work not only with health, but with the social relations of residents as well (see also Article D). Based on this, the project appeared to fulfil my criteria of working directly with residents (as opposed to the organizational processes of which the local community work also consists), and of focusing explicitly on life. Therefore, I observed the project and I visited it over the following two months (a more detailed description of this project can be found in Article D). One issue, however, was that the influx of residents into this project was rather unpredictable, leading to several afternoons in which limited opportunities for observing interactions between local community workers and residents presented themselves. While the informal conversations I could have with local community workers were beneficial, I found the lack of residents problematic, since I was interested in seeing their work *with* residents. Thus, I contacted two other projects, Project N and Project D. This led to an extended period of participant observation within Project N, as well as a shorter period of participant observation in Project D. I chose to focus on Project N, because I could conduct a more extensive fieldwork and because I was allowed to shadow (Czarniawska, 2007) local community workers for longer periods of time. In Project D, this was limited to educational activities for men, which only occurred once per week. Thus, I focused on Project N.

Within Project N, I was initially interested in the activities that focused on health, but I soon discovered that the local community workers viewed working with health as a broad endeavour, which also involved, for instance, working with people's opportunities for employment, their social lives in the area and educating them. Thus, I followed as many activities as possible during this fieldwork: I sat in on meetings between local community workers and followed them as they visited residents, as they had meetings with residents, etc. During this fieldwork, I also participated in a vacation arranged for residents to generate social networks between them. I interviewed five residents about their experiences with the local community work and the areas they lived in. These empirical materials were interesting, but I also realized that following this line of inquiry more closely would lead me too far away from the purpose of the project, namely understanding how local community work enacts orderings of life.

4.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

My project was, in addition to the project within which it was embedded, approved by the Danish Data Protection Agency, and I was careful not to note any potentially confidential personal information or information that could make it possible to

identify individual persons. All projects, participants and geographical areas of this study are anonymized through the consistent use of pseudonyms and the changing of minor details. All interviewed informants were told that they would be anonymized. In addition to interviewing and following local community workers, I also came into contact with several residents. I always strived to gain consent from them as well, although this was not always possible. This is a common problem when conducting fieldwork in public and semi-public spaces, and it is another reason why I sought to remove all identifiable information.

INTERVIEWS

For this thesis, I conducted 18 semi-structured interviews with local community workers and seven with residents. The majority of my interviews were between 20 minutes to an hour and a half long.

My first interviews were conducted five months after my project started (December 2014), while my final interviews were conducted almost one year after that (December - January 2015). During this time span, I had time to reflect upon my interview strategy and my questions, which accordingly evolved throughout the project. However, I ensured that my interview strategy was always guided by my on-going interest in *orderings of life* and in the practices of local community workers. Drawing on my methodological sensibilities, my interviews always began by asking my informants to describe their practices. This would entail questions such as:

- What does a specific day look like for you? What do you do?
- What activities do you have in this project?
- With whom do you collaborate?
- How do you work with residents?
- What would I have to know, if I were to do your job?

I would also ask questions about how my informants viewed the residents they were targeting. I did this to gain descriptions of not just what my informants did, but also how they conceptualized it, including how they saw and imagined residents and their problems. One of my aims in doing so was to force my informants to speak about life – the lives they saw residents living and the lives they wanted them to live. Thus, I would ask questions such as:

- Who are you targeting with this intervention? Why?
- How do you determine whether or not people are healthy?
- How do you see social problems?
- Can you describe work that has been especially successful? If so, what happened?

By asking questions about work that had been *successful*, my goal was to further create discussions about how – and if – their ordering attempts had succeeded (or failed). Throughout all my interviews, I was interested in learning about the practices of local community work and in understanding how the workers saw and attempted to order *life*.

Furthermore, after I had conducted my fieldwork in Project N, I returned to interview five of the local community workers whom I had followed. These interviews further focused on having them describe their practices, but I also introduced specific examples from my fieldwork. This was inspired by Pols (2006) and was done so that my informants would reflect on their routines, logic and knowledge that could otherwise be implicit (Pols, 2006, p. 79)

I also interviewed a consultant working in the field of local community work. As this consultant held a central position in the field, I asked him general questions about local community work in Denmark, including the theories, perspectives and ambitions within the field.

In addition to the interviews with local community workers, I also conducted seven interviews with residents: two from Project D and five from Project N. These interviews focused on their experiences living in their neighbourhoods and participating in local community projects. While these interviews were interesting, interviewing residents more thoroughly would have led my project away from its focus on the practices of local community work. Thus, I only used these interviews sparingly in my empirical analyses (see Article B).

Finally, my interviews are not representative of the entire field of local community work. However, I do not see this as particularly problematic, because the disparity of local community work, especially the plethora of difference specific practices, means that perfect representation is most likely impossible. Indeed, the relative disparity within my interview sample can be said to *reflect* the disparity of the field. My interviews ought to be considered several partial accounts about local community work and the practices within specific local community projects. Thus, the interviews should not be taken to express a fundamental *truth* or *essence* about local community work. Indeed, a perfect representation of practice is arguably impossible (Jensen and Lauritsen, 2005). Instead, these interviews are constructed accounts of practice in local community work. This would be a weakness of the project, if the interviews, in isolation, accounted for practice. However, as I detail in the following section, I also conducted participant observation.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

> "To observe means to watch what is going on around and about, and of course to listen and feel as well. To participate means to do so from within the current of activity in which you carry on a life alongside and

> together with the persons and things that capture your attention" (Ingold, 2014, p. 387).

I consider participant observation, similar to Ingold, to be the prime approach within anthropology, and one whose simple purpose is to live "[…] attentionally with others" (Ingold, 2014, p. 389). For Ingold, anthropology is a *craft*, an approach whose method is "[…] that of the practitioner working with people and materials, then its discipline lies in the observational engagement and perceptual attunement that allow the practitioner to follow what is going on, and in turn to respond to it" (Ingold, 2014, p. 390). For Ingold, any strict delineation between *observation* and *participation* is nonsensical, as any observation requires some degree of "perceptual attunement". While Ingold concerns himself primarily with anthropology, I believe these reflections are also a fitting description of many qualitative social science studies.

While I did not *carry out* local community work, I did participate in the practices I observed. I listened to local community workers and residents, asked questions and was asked questions in return. I further observed meetings between local community workers and meetings between local community workers and residents. I followed and shadowed (Czarniawska, 2007) local community workers as they performed activities across the areas in which they worked and I observed local community workers discuss their practices at workshops and conferences. Throughout my fieldwork, I *attended* (Ingold, 2014, p. 389) to what local community workers did, what they said, the ways they said it and to whom they said it. I would initiate small-talk with both local community workers and residents, though the majority of my interactions were always with local community workers.

Participant observation is, of course, a method that involves more than merely the ocular senses. Indeed, as Forsey has argued, what is reported in ethnographies is more often things heard (such as conversations) than things *seen* (Forsey, 2010, p. 563). This is also captured nicely by Ingold's notion of *attending*, which does not establish a sensory hierarchy. Indeed, my fieldwork was as much one of participant observation as one of participant listening. This is to say that *talking* was pervasive in my fieldwork. The practices of local community work to which I attended were primarily arranged around talking: giving accounts of residents, meetings and explaining things to people. Thus, the empirical materials from my fieldwork often centre on people speaking to one another. This does not mean that objects and materials were forgotten, but that the informants' discussions were an important element in their practices. I discuss this further in the final chapter of this thesis.

Central to fieldwork and participant observation is writing notes. Throughout all of my fieldwork, I carried my field diary and diligently wrote notes about what was occurring. Inspired by the Latourian notion that "everything is data" (Latour, 2005, p. 133), Initially, I attempted to record as much as possible of "what went on" in the

field. However, as I quickly realized, this is a rather impossible task.[28] My observations were guided by my theoretical interests in ordering and practice. Thus, I had an open approach to practice, which understood it as the local and situated activities (for instance, of doings, sayings, undergoings and translations). I thus focused on what was happening, who was acting, what was being said, what was being done and what people were meant to be undergoing.

The following table presents examples of the types of activities I observed and in which I participated. This table does not include *everything* I did, but rather provides several examples.

Examples of observations

	Project H	**Project N**	**Project D**	**Site 4**
Observations	Observed volunteers and local community workers weigh residents, measure their blood pressure and discuss their diets. Observed local community workers discuss how to anonymously register the visitors in the project. Observed local	Observed meetings between local community workers and residents. Observed local community workers accompany residents to meetings with various authorities. Shadowed local community workers as they sought out residents in the local area. Shadowed	Followed one local community worker as he visited a group of marginalized men. Followed a project that sought to educate men in a marginalized residential area.	Attended one "after work" meeting for local community workers. Attended one conference and one workshop for local community workers.

[28] Additionally, as Brinkmann (2014, p. 721) has argued, if everything is data, then *nothing* is data. The value of this methodological dictum is thus, questionable.

	community workers decorate their offices to make them cosy. Participated in a social meeting for men.	local community workers as they worked with a group of women. Observed interactions between local community workers and residents.		

During my fieldwork, I made "jottings" in my field diary (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995, pp. 25–26) and, as soon as possible thereafter, I would elaborate on these notes in as great of detail as my memory allowed. Here is an example of one such field note:

> I'm sitting on a chair in the corner of Lina and Angela's office, listening to them talk. Angela tells Lina how two young people in the area haven't gotten their benefits this month. Angela decides to call the municipality, but the line is occupied, and she says that she can't get through to them. Lina says that she couldn't this morning either. Lina has put two stacks of paper in front of her on her desk. She starts going through it. Some of the paperwork is made into booklets, other is put into folders, and some is thrown out (field note, Project N).

This field note is a snapshot of the activities that would take place in Project N. In it, I accounted for the *doings* (Angela calling the municipality, Lina sorting paperwork), *sayings* (their conversation) and a number of the objects, such as desks, folders, booklets and paperwork. However, this is not a pre-given piece of "data". The above excerpt has undergone several *translations* and *transformations* in the actor-network theoretical sense of the term (Latour, 2005, pp. 106–108). In the translation from the situated event to its materialization in my field diary and further, to its inscription into a word document and translation into English and insertion here, countless facets were lost: the smells, the appearances of my informants, the weather – such a list can continue, potentially endlessly. Field notes are, as Emerson, Fretz and Shaw have noted, inscriptions which "[…] are products of and reflect conventions for *transforming* witnessed events, persons, and places into words on paper" (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995, p. 9, emphasis in original).

Furthermore, as they have emphasised, this inevitably involves a process of selection. Indeed, a different researcher could have chosen to emphasise other aspects of this situation. What is hopefully *not* lost in translation, then, is a reasonably accurate account of what occurred during this specific situation.

Approximately halfway through my fieldwork in Project H, I realized that I should be more careful with regard to how I recorded verbatim quotes from my informants (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995, pp. 51, 74–75). Until then, I had placed "reconstructed" quotes in quotation marks, with no further thought. However, I then reviewed my field notes, and amended those that I could not guarantee were verbatim. Therefore, for the remainder of my fieldwork, I distinguished between dialogue and sayings I had recorded verbatim and those that I had paraphrased. In the field note above, the dialogue between Lina and Angela is entirely paraphrased. Whenever I present empirical materials in this thesis and its articles, anything in quotation marks is a verbatim quotation, while all other dialogue is reconstructed and paraphrased.

In general, I felt welcomed during my experiences in the field. For instance, in Project H, I was introduced at a common meeting as "safe" and non-dangerous. In Project N, the majority of my informants also appeared quite happy at telling me stories and discussing their work with me. My informants also commonly helped me attend to what was going on. This was especially evident in Project N, where (as I mentioned in Chapter 1) many of the residents were refugees or immigrants, and spoke Danish to different degrees. I observed many interactions in Arabic between one of my informants, Lina, and residents, which she would translate for me. This is both an example of how I did not just "observe", but became mixed in the interaction, and it exhibits how my informants also included me in their practices and helped me understand and attend to what they did. Local community workers would often explain and justify my presence to residents, to which they rarely objected.

In other instances, my identity as a male university researcher influenced my fieldwork in ways that reveal details about the sensitivity of local community work. For instance, Project N had several women-only activities (these activities involved, as I understood it, primarily Muslim women), in which I (being a man) could not participate. In Project D, I was denied access to initial rounds of teaching in a project because they found it too vulnerable to allow a researcher in. When I gained access here, the local community workers afterwards explained to me in great detail that the men were usually much more participatory and active, saying that perhaps they were shy due to the visit from "the university". It is, of course, impossible for researchers to *not* influence their fields. I undoubtedly did so as well. Thus, I hold no pretence within this thesis that I covered *all* of local community work, that I observed everything that went on, nor that I was a "fly on the wall". Law has argued that "*method always works not simply by detecting but also by amplifying reality"*

(Law, 2004, p. 116, emphasis in original). Similarly, my approach undoubtedly amplified some realities and neglected others. Such are the necessary conditions for any kind of research.

4.6. ANALYTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this thesis, my analytical strategy was guided by my interest in both practice and ordering, yet it was also *honed* these sensibilities. Thus, while I had the provisional idea that local community work enacts orderings of life, the *specificities* of this question were much less clear. In this sense, my strategy shifted between my research question, my empirical materials and various theoretical literatures.

Specifically, my approach for this thesis involved reading my empirical materials multiple times, familiarizing myself with them and emphasizing the mysteries or curiosities that arose while doing so. In this process, I consistently wrote provisional, analytical notes in the margin of my materials, which served as potential interpretations of explanations and which attempted to find connections and relations between the different activities of local community workers.

This analytical approach was *abductive*. Abduction stems from the pragmatist tradition of inquiry, especially as defined by C. S. Peirce (see Bertilsson, 2004). Abduction is an analytical process that is fundamentally driven by "mystery" or "breakdown" (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007; Brinkmann, 2014). An analytical puzzle reveals itself, for instance, during the fieldwork or in the reading empirical materials, and abduction is the continuous process of making provisional explanations that *fit* (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012, p. 171). As Timmermans and Tavory have noted: "Abductive analysis involves a recursive process of double-fitting data and theories. An abductive inference involves making a preliminary guess based on the interplay between existing theories and data when anomalies or unexpected findings occur" (2012, p. 179).

My abductive approach can be illustrated through the process undertaken for the creation of Article A of this thesis. The first article I wrote for this thesis, Article A, was created through multiple, slightly overlapping steps. I conducted my literature review and familiarized myself with the literature on local community work. In both the sociological literature and in the Local Revitalization Plans, the importance of social relations, social capital and community are emphasised. I encountered this in the field as well. My informants would speak of "bridging" residents and the importance of generating networks. My first abductive curiosity arose here. What, I wondered, does it *practically* mean to "bridge" residents or to generate "social networks"? What does such work look like? Around this time, I also encountered contemporary analyses of infrastructure (Simone, 2004; Larkin, 2013; Amin, 2014). From the literature review, I conjectured that perhaps local community work's

ambition to connect could be understood as *ordering* through the making of new *infrastructures* in marginalized residential areas.

From this provisional assumption, I then reviewed my empirical materials to test my new idea – could local community work be seen as infrastructure? If so, what is being infrastructured, and what does this mean? My attempts to view my empirical materials from new perspectives is similar to what is known as defamiliarization (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007, pp. 40–41). This was fuelled by my ambition to surpass the common sociological repertoires used to analyse local community work. Exactly because "social capital" and "social networks" are ideas embedded *within* local community work itself, I found these concepts inappropriate to help understand what was occurring. The notion that local community workers were engaged in *infrastructuring the social*, as I termed it, is thus an alternative way of describing local community work, which came to be through continuous abductive movements between my empirical materials and the literature concerning infrastructure (such as Star, 1999; Simone, 2004; Larkin, 2013; Amin, 2014).

The abductive process informed my other articles as well. For instance, in my second article (Article B), it was only after familiarizing myself with various literature on responsibility and responsibilization (for instance Rose, 1999; Trnka and Trundle, 2014) that I realized that my empirical materials could be seen as the making of responsibility. The specificities of the analysis – for instance, that responsibility becomes *distributed* and that responsibility is multiple – similarly only emerged through iterative movements between my empirical materials and the theoretical literature on multiplicity (e.g. Mol, 2002; Mol and Law, 2002; Trnka and Trundle, 2014).

Key to this process has been writing (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005). It was through the writing of multiple drafts, wherein theory and empirical materials could be tested against one another, that my ideas took form and that my concepts were honed. Ideas were also abandoned when they did not fit the empirical materials. At several stages I possessed analytical ideas that I unsuccessfully tried to fashion into drafts and which I subsequently discarded. This is an important part of the research process, indeed, a necessary part. As Latour has noted, the sociological text is "[…] the functional equivalent of a laboratory. It's a place for trials, experiments, and simulations" (Latour, 2005, p. 149). The articles and analyses I produced should be seen as the result of such textual experiments. I leave it to the reader to judge their success.

ARTICLE A. INFRASTRUCTURING THE SOCIAL: LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK, URBAN POLICY AND MARGINALIZED RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN DENMARK

Hoffmann Birk, R. (2017). Infrastructuring the social: Local community work, urban policy and marginalized residential areas in Denmark, *Environment and Planning A*, 49(4), pp.767-783.

ARTICLE B: MAKING MULTIPLE RESPONSIBILITIES: ON RESPONSIBILIZATION AND LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK IN MARGINALIZED RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN DENMARK

Hoffmann Birk, R. (under review). Making multiple responsibilities: On responsibilization and local community work in marginalized residential areas in Denmark, (Under review in *The Sociological Review*).

ARTICLE C: MAKING LIFE LIVEABLE: LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE MARGIN IN DENMARK

Hoffmann Birk, R. (under review). Making life liveable: Local community work between the state and the margin in Denmark. (Under review in *The European Journal of Social Work*).

ARTICLE D: THE MULTIPLICITY OF PROBLEMS IN LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK: BRINGING STS AND SOCIAL WORK TOGETHER

Hoffmann Birk, R. (submitted). The multiplicity of problems in local community work: Bringing STS and social work together. (Submitted to *Science, Technology & Human Values*).

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will conclude my thesis by reflecting upon the inquiry and my analytical and theoretical ideas. The thesis, I want to stress, does not add up to a perfect whole. Each of the articles presented in the previous sections contains its own argument, while still concerning the same topic of inquiry: local community work in Denmark and how it enacts orderings of life.

The articles argue that local community work enacts four different orderings of life: it attempts to infrastructure the social, to make people responsible, to make life liveable and it specifies and transforms particular problems.

These are not *orders*, but *orderings*. They are on-going and they are precarious; they are also the result of situated *activities*. Furthermore, they are the imputation of patterns that may change or be disrupted.

This discussion aims to discuss some general themes of the thesis. I begin with the idea of *ordering* and how it relates to discussions about structure. Subsequently, I discuss the idea of *life* vis-à-vis the idea of ordering. I then reflect on the directions which my inquiry has taken, before finally discussing the potential for generalization that this thesis presents and concluding the thesis.

5.1. ORDERING

Throughout all of the articles, I maintain an ambivalent relation to the governance, normativity and the notion of societal "structure". I attempted throughout all of the articles to not fall into a structuralist or governmental trap wherein the practices of local community workers can simply be derived from their functioning within "larger" structures of, for instance, policy. I attempted to both surpass the (neo)-Foucauldian idiom as the art of conducting conduct (Bevir, 2010) and focus on describing and analysing the (sometimes mundane and messy) specificities of day-to-day ordering.

However, a critical reader of this thesis might question whether this approach focuses overly much on the "mess" and the "micro" contexts and not enough on the "structural" contexts or "macro" contexts within which local community work is embedded. This question of *scale* is often accompanied by questions of *structure*; i.e. what sort of mechanisms "out there" affect what takes place in particular practices (e.g. Elder-Vass, 2008)

A key difference between actor-network theory and much of social theory is the approach to "structure" or "context" (Latour, 2005; Elder-Vass, 2008). From its inception, actor-network theory has explicitly argued against notions of "structure" and problematized "context" as an explanation, arguing that there are only associations between heterogeneous actors (Callon and Latour, 1981; Latour, 2005). *Scale*, here, is a *performance* rather than pre-given (see also Bruun Jensen, 2007). Policies that either grant or reduce unemployment benefits, letters that request payment for rent, letters that (perhaps) grant you permit of residency in Denmark are not the result of a unified "macro structure", but rather the end-result of complicated chain of actors and associations, interwoven with the lived, private lives.

If local community work is the result of an *actor-network* with obligatory passage points, such as Local Revitalization Plans, then the entire question of *scale* becomes framed differently. Instead, rather than having pre-existing scales, local community work *enacts its own scale;* it is *neither* micro nor macro, and the approach used in this thesis was an attempt to bypass such questions entirely. Indeed, my analysis of how local community work *infrastructures the social* examines how particular *spaces* or *scales* become enacted *through the very work itself*. This approach is mirrored in Article D, which demonstrates how the *problems* of local community work are constantly specified through practices that also enact scales of problems: where the problem at first was the marginalized area, it becomes transformed into groups of people, family relations, individuals, their abilities to reflect, etc. These reconfigurations of scale happen through the practices of local community work.

The point, then, is *not* to view local community work as a series of free-floating practices, but rather to see it as instantiated through multiple networks in which policies are also actors. However, as actor-network theory also reminds us, the making of networks always includes *translations* (Latour, 2005; Law, 2009). Policies, goals, norms – these all become translated, or changed. The goal of creating social mix in an area becomes on-going practices of educating residents; it turns into trying to help residents find employment, which then (sometimes) becomes just helping them have liveable lives. Thus, the point of my analyses, to reiterate, was *not* to neglect political, structural contexts, but rather to reveal how policies themselves become transformed and translated through the very practice of local community work. In other words, local community work partially enacts its own context.

In an illuminating juxtaposition of governmentality and actor-network theory, Blok has argued that these two theories are similar in their investigation of how "[…] heterogeneous sociopolitical elements – practices, texts, material forms, techniques of power, ways of problematizing – come to cohere into relatively enduring spatiotemporal configurations of governance" (Blok, 2014, p. 48).

Configured through actor-network theory, Blok has noted that "[…] politics emerges as ongoing collective experimentation" (2014, p. 43). Indeed, within actor-network theory, politics has been re-articulated as the process through which particular issues and their publics are jointly configured (Blok, 2014, p. 49). Thus, the point is *not* to pin issues of politics and norms on "larger structures", but rather to explore *particular* and *situated* collective processes and practices of collective experimentation *in which* policies and norms also are included. From this vantage point, practices of local community work are *collective experiments* that attempt to enact particular orderings of life in marginalized residential areas.

Political actors, plans, policies, normative ideas, inscriptions, etc. all participate in this collective endeavour. Local community work has obvious normative goals, as seen in the focus on employment, education and responsibility. These goals can be said to *come from* political rationalities (Fallov, 2010) and governmentalities. However, I argue that such a designation says very little about how this becomes practiced, and when, where and how it becomes shifted and re-specified. My point is not to *neglect* politics and normativities, but rather to demonstrate how they play out in practices – and how they partake in practices *alongside other actors*. Thus, as I have demonstrated in my articles, lay knowledge and ideas (Article D), residents (all articles), material infrastructures (Article A) are *also* participants in these collective experiments.

Infrastructuring the social is an example of how policies become specified in the way they are enacted, and how they, with regard to these specifications, also shift. Thus, local community workers conduct a sort of collective experimentation in which social relations are drawn upon and in which normative conceptions of their areas are entangled (e.g. ideas that people are behaving badly). Infrastructuring the social is a particular ordering of life that focuses on making people *mobile*; on making them move – figuratively and literally – towards normative ideas about life. This collective experimentation requires on-going, difficult work.

In Article D, the on-going specification of problems and solutions within local community work is entangled within implicit and explicit ideas about the good life, healthy living and proper behaviour. This work is, on the one hand, on-going collective experimentation that specifies problems and, on the other hand, not completely local or improvised; it is not cut off from networks of policy.

Local community work, I propose, can be seen as a normative collective of experimentations that enact the orderings of life; however, in these practices of experimentation, norms are also (potentially) sorted out. This means that politics and policies do not imbue local community work with inevitable norms and directions, butthat can be experimented on; ones that are sometimes bricolaged. Thus, local community work should be seen as the practice of normative, collective experimentations with *ordering life*. Ordering here emerges as situated, practical

work; as experimental work that may equally involve lay knowledge and improvisation as well as political ambitions and goals.

5.2. LIFE

In my analyses, I suggest that enacting orderings of life is on-going, precarious and difficult; it takes *work*. Orderings of life are always multiple and always incomplete. Why is this so? And what do I mean by life? These two questions are important to discuss, although they are difficult to answer. "What is life" is a far too complex question for me to realistically answer here. However, by returning to the work of Ingold, it is possible to partially understand both what is meant by orderings of *life* and why these orderings are always incomplete and precarious.

My answer is thus: orderings of life are always incomplete, exactly because they *target life*. This does not mean that the activities of local community work do not work, but simply that their *end* (their target) is always moving.

This is an answer I draw from my reading of Ingold's work on *life* (Ingold, 2008, 2011, 2015), a reading which admittedly contains several inconsistencies with the theoretical sensibilities from actor-network theory and STS, which have otherwise inspired this thesis. I discuss this in greater detail further on in this section.

To briefly state Ingold's ideas of *life*, he regards human life as a continuous process of becoming (Ingold, 2011, p. 9).[29] Being human is not really *being* (Ingold, 2015, pp. 117–118), but rather an on-going movement of becoming – a movement of opening, rather than closing: "Becoming is not a connection between this and that but follows a 'line of flight' that pulls away from both" (Ingold, 2008, p. 1805). Life, Ingold argues, *goes on* (Ingold, 2015, p. 117). Life is always in its unfolding. This idea about life is useful to consider arguing that local community work enacts orderings of *life*. The idea tells us that the target of local community work – insofar as it is life – is a moving one. As Ingold has noted, "[…] every end or goal, in its realisation, establishes the possibility of moving on" (Ingold, 2015, p. 127). Thus, life is not an end-state, but a process of unfolding, a going-on, a *journey*. As Ingold cites from Deleuze, "*A* life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 29, emphasis in original; cited in Ingold, 2015, p. 144). This then, is the target of local community work: not just the mass of living beings, but how these living beings each live *a* life and the paths they take while doing so.

[29] This becoming, he stresses, is interwoven with the becomings of animals, of plants, the weather, etc. (see also Ingold, 2008, 2011, p. 9, 2015).

However, what Ingold does not consider in detail are the myriad efforts that seek to *direct* or *shape* human becoming, what I have termed *ordering*. To further quote Ingold:

> "For social life is not something the person does but what the person undergoes: a process in which human beings both grow and are grown, undergoing histories of development and maturation – from birth through infancy and childhood into adulthood and old age – within fields of relationships established through the presence and activities of others" (Ingold, 2015, p. 125).

By articulating human becoming as entangled with the undergoings and doings of others, Ingold almost articulates the concern I have, namely with regard to how the unfolding of life is also shaped. However, these formulations do not engage with the *directed efforts* of others. If *a life* is always on-going, how can we understand the processes that attempt to direct it? To answer this, I depart slightly from Ingold and return to my reflections on ordering. Ordering *life*, I believe, is the collective experimentations that attempt to lay down a (normative) trajectory for the other to take. *Life* is at stake in these processes. As Fassin (2009, p. 48) has noted (see also Chapter 3, section 3.1), *life* may be shortened or lengthened through governance and policies; it may – as I have shown in my articles – be cared for (Article C) or its problems may be specified (Article D). But in this, life may diverge from and resist normative trajectories, just as well as it may latch on to such paths. Efforts to, for instance, help people find employment, are not just a matter of "adding" together a person and a workplace, but of *joining them up* (Ingold, 2015, pp. 24–26), of tying together new knots of life. It is a matter of making people – agentially – assume particular trajectories, since ultimately, the *other* is the one who has to lead his or her own life.

But this *ordering*, these attempts to make people assume *particular* trajectories, is always prone to mess and precariousness *exactly* because life is recalcitrant. As Ingold has stated, "[…] in an open world, the creeping entanglements of life will always and inevitably triumph over our attempts to box them in" (Ingold, 2008, p. 1809). It is harsh to view local community work as attempts to "box" in life, but the metaphor is useful for understanding the predicament of local community work. Local community work – like many other practices of help – is caught in the tension between being the means to a particular end and caring for the other (see also Article C). However, exactly because human becoming is an on-going relational process (always escaping attempts to box it in), these activities are always engaged in projects of ordering whose utopian ends can never be fully achieved.

Therefore, Ingold's work provides us with an understanding of why orderings of life are always precarious – they are precarious, because human becoming is an on-going, relational process which always evades any attempt to box it in. Orderings of life, then, are the multiple, precarious processes of collective experimentation that

attempt to shape the trajectories of human becoming. This is work that slips and slides exactly because it targets life. This does not mean that local community work *does not work*, but rather that we must widen our understanding of what it means for something to "work".

In drawing upon Ingold, I depart slightly from actor-network theory. While actor-network theory emphasises how, what would typically be thought of as inert materials, can be *lively*; its principle of generalized symmetry and its commitment to understanding *objectivity* means that *subjectivity* is neglected (see Krarup and Blok, 2011; Hoffmann Birk, 2016). I think there is much that actor-network theory and STS could learn from Ingold's approach, even if his phenomenological inspirations may not speak to the sensibilities of actor-network theory and STS. Latour, for instance, has expressed his dislike of phenomenology (see for instance Latour, 1999c, pp. 9–10), which he believes instantiates a problematic subject-object split. I would argue that Ingold also works diligently to overcome Cartesian dualisms (e.g. Ingold, 2011), but there are arguably other substantial differences. Most pertinent is Ingold's firm focus on *organisms* as fundamentally different from "inert matter" (e.g. Ingold, 2011, p. 94). Discussions over the nature of agency and the meaning of the human being have been on-going since the advent of actor-network theory (for overviews, see for instance Sayes, 2014; Michael, 2017, pp. 67–72), in which especially the delegation of agency towards non-humans has been controversial. While this is not the place to repeat such dialogues, I am, however, sympathetic towards Ingold's differentiation between living organisms (such as human beings) and materials, which I think could complement – and benefit from – actor-network theory and STS. Firstly, Ingold's ideas could help rectify what Krarup and Blok (2011, pp. 46–47) have rightly identified as a Latorian weakness, namely the *human subject* (or "fold") without falling into a subject-object dichotomy or phenomenology. Secondly, actor-network theory (and STS) could also help move Ingold's work towards conceptualizing the activities through which *societies* (or *collectives*, to stay in the Latourian parlance) are built. Ingold, in his recent work, has argued that his idea of life as a line (with the complex metaphysics and philosophy this entails) can "[…] transform our approach to the study of social life in all its traditional subfields: of kinship and affinity, ecology and economy, ritual and religion, politics and law" (Ingold, 2015, p. 154). One might note that this list of studies of social life is – mildly put – incomplete. More importantly, however, Ingold's work says little about how to practically approach the conceptualization of social life in all its complicatedness – to use a Latourian expression (Latour, 1996a) – in the 21st century. To reiterate, while Ingold's work informs us about *life*, it says much less about *ordering*.

Thus, one final argument I want to make is that if we want to understand social interventions and practices of help (such as local community work), it is beneficial to thoroughly consider the tensions between the lines of life and the on-going (sociomaterial) processes of ordering.

5.3. REFLECTIONS UPON THE PROJECT AND FUTURE RESEARCH

From the beginning of this project, I was interested in local community work as *sociomaterial*; I was interested in how (or if) the materialities and geographies of particular marginalized residential area partook in this work (see Chapter 3, section 3.2). Indeed, my articles can be seen attempts to grapple with the question of how actor-network theory approaches practices that are engaged in shaping human subjects, although it has been difficult to focus on materiality.

In my fieldwork, despite paying attention to objects and things, the materiality of the areas rarely appeared to be an *actor*. My informants rarely, if ever, mentioned it. The *materiality* of the area (e.g. buildings, tunnels, etc.) seemed more to be a stage for their activities with residents, rather than an actor in its own right. In my articles, I *have* described (some) sociomaterialities of local community work as it happens in particular places, since it is entwined with material infrastructures (Article A) or with documents and letters (Article B and C). Nevertheless, what was pertinent throughout my fieldwork was that a central part of the ordering life was *talk*. Local community workers, quite simply, *talked* a great deal. There were few obvious technologies or materialities that played as much a part as the work of talk. Of course, "talk" should not be seen as *opposed* to materiality, rather that the practices of local community work were material-semiotic and often skewed more towards the semiotics than the material. This aspect of talk was often *complicated* (Strum and Latour, 1987; Latour, 1996a) by the interjections of various technologies (phones, computers, emails). One reason for the prevalence of "talk" could be that, other than everyday technologies such as computers and mobile phones, local community workers have fairly few stable "technologies" upon which to draw. They cannot rely on legal sanctions (unlike social workers in municipalities), and their work is wholly based on residents' voluntary participation. Thus, much of their work, both with each other and with residents, must necessarily consist of that ancient human "technology": the power of talk and persuasion.

There is nothing inherently problematic, from the perspective of actor-network theory, in focusing on people's talk. Indeed, any suggestion that "materials" are missing from my analyses, risks falling back into a simplified dichotomy of subjects and objects. Furthermore, the consistent and thorough argument from Latour (amongst others) is to completely disregard this distinction. Focusing on talk, then, is not necessarily in opposition to an emphasis on materiality. Rather, as Bruun Jensen has astutely noted (and as I also mention in Article D), it "[…] would be a shame to bifurcate nature in reverse by making part of the world everything except how we conceive of it" (2012, p. 10).

Retrospectively, however, it is clear that I should have approached my thesis differently, if the materiality of the marginalized residential areas was to assume a

more substantial role. One way of doing this could be through utilizing a more explicit point of departure within the political networks of local community work (rather than its practices). For instance, it would have been interesting to approach the networks and processes through which particular residential areas become "matters of concern" more thoroughly (Latour, 2004b), which refers to how they become issues and how publics coalesce around them (Marres, 2007). Such an approach could, for instance, have started from the large-scale regeneration project happening in the marginalized residential area Gellerup – one of Denmark's most infamous areas – where houses are being torn down to transform it from a "socially marginalized area" to an "attractive part of the city" (Aarhus Municipality, 2012). This could have entailed a more thorough and situated exploration of large-scale urban regeneration projects as a configuration of issues and publics, including the role of materiality. However, such an approach would likely also have required a greater time-frame than the three years this project has taken. It would also have come at the cost of exploring practices of local community work *with* residents. In summary, I think there are intriguing possibilities for approaching local community work and marginalized residential areas by drawing on some of the recent STS approaches to participation, politics and democracy (e.g. Marres, 2007, 2012; Barry, 2013).

Lastly, it could be interesting to more thoroughly examine how various sociological ideas become part of local community work. As I have already presented (Article A), ideas about "social mix" and "community" are a central part of local community work, not just in Denmark, but internationally (e.g. Galster, 2007; Christensen, 2015). Specifically, what could and should be explored in future research are the ways in which local community work (in Denmark, but perhaps also other places) appears to be, at least partly, enacted and configured by the social sciences, for instance as seen in the proliferation of ideas of social capital (Blokland and Savage, 2008; Fallov, 2011b). One may note that the academic ideas that seem to become policy are rarely critical. The connections between social sciences and urban policy are, as Slater (2010) has emphasised, ripe for further exploration. In Denmark, the Urban Committee's work was evaluated and supported by my own university, and today there is an entire Centre[30] dedicated to evaluating and strengthening local community work. Thus, following these threads of academic knowledge and political interventions is an obvious target for the sensibilities of STS and actor-network theory. Relatedly, an interesting parallel would also be to commit to a more thorough exploration of local community work's *colonial* heritage. As Hermansen has mentioned (1985, p. 12), local community work in Denmark draws upon the British tradition of community development, which in turn, was inspired by work in the British colonies. As argued by Ranta-Tyrkkö (2011), social work in the Nordic countries has a rather unexamined colonial legacy. Several questions for further

[30] In Danish: "Center for Boligsocial Udvikling".

exploration could involve what – if anything – this colonial legacy means for present-day local community work.

In summary, there are multiple avenues for future research. The idea of local community work as collective experimentation could be one way to begin such inquiries. This could explore how materiality, practice and politics are jointly configured, and how society and the good life become enacted.

5.4. GENERALIZATION?

My fieldwork and three years of sustained inquiry into local community work has taught me many things, including the dangers of over-generalizing. There were many practices I did not participate in, many things I did not see and many roads that could have been taken, but were not. As initially stated, I do not want to posit that my analyses "represent" local community work. Therefore, without lessening the analytical insights that my articles *do* present, I want to emphasise that they do not provide a complete picture.

Local community work is multiple. By virtue of its relations, local community work shifts between a singular existence and multiple ones. As we saw, "it" cuts across multiple regions, upheld by loose networks of heterogeneous actors. It is exactly because local community work takes on multiple forms and specificities that any strict generalization is difficult.

Local community work is not a general, universal practice. What happens in Denmark is not what happens in the Netherlands, nor in the UK, Taiwan or Germany. It is a local, and rather specific, series of practices. Furthermore, it does not translate easily. Thus, my analyses speak first and foremost about these local practices. This does not mean that there are no aspects that transcend local practices. For instance, strategies of "social mix" or the narrative that *community* has declined in particular areas can be found not only in Denmark, but in the Netherlands as well (Blokland, 2003; Blokland and Rae, 2008). However, I have continuously attempted to emphasise that such political ideas always become translated and re-configured in specific practices. This means that "generalization" is difficult. Rather than generalize, I find it more productive to discuss what can be learned *from* these practices.

LESSON ONE: LIFE IS AT STAKE IN PRACTICES OF LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK.

In discourses in Denmark, the marginalized residential area is continually singled out as a "ghetto" and commonly treated as a blemish on society or as a disorderly

"parallel society". Such narratives are generalizations that neglect the individual lives being lived and the histories and the politics of the individual areas. They wash away the differences. The areas referred to as marginalized are, I would argue, heterogeneous areas of sameness and difference, and they warrant much more detailed portrayals than they receive. These areas, and the lives lived within them, deserve not to be held hostage in national politics. Marginalized residential areas are, instead, heterogeneous areas of both sameness and difference that ought to be portrayed more carefully than is often the case in Denmark today.

This thesis adds to the already existing literature that argues that practices of local community work can *matter* (e.g. Christensen, 2013). These practices do not undo the marginalized residential area, but tend to the lives of those who live there. Fundamentally, in these practices, *life is at stake*. However, the impact on the individual life is commonly neglected in academic literature, as well as popular discourse. I argue that it matters whether someone cares for a neglected area; it matters that someone attempt to unmake marginal positions; it matters that someone attend to the mundane and everyday problems of people. If life, as I have argued, is at stake in local community work, then it follows that thorough ethical reflections should also be part of practices of local community work.

LESSON TWO: ORDERING LIFE IS A MESS, BECAUSE LIFE IS A MESS

What we might also learn from this thesis is that practices of ordering, especially when they target *life*, can be contingent and messy. And they are so *exactly because* they target life. Of course, claiming that ordering and governance can be a mess is not novel. In this way, I contribute to the literature that highlights the difficulties of enacting orderings (e.g. Scott, 1998; Li, 2005, 2007; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013). The implication I intend here is not that all attempts to order life differently should cease, but rather that even if local community work does not enact perfectly standardized lives, it may still matter for *a* life. However, if contingency, mess or transformation are unavoidable when trying to order, then perhaps ordering efforts could include further meta-reflections about what exactly is being transformed, what is contingent and what these processes of ordering are doing.

LESSON THREE: LOCAL COMMUNITY WORK CAN BE DONE DIFFERENTLY

The third lesson I want to draw from my analyses is that paying attention to actual practices may illuminate what is being done, and how what is being done may be done differently. I hope that through my analyses I have engendered a wider interest in what is being done in social and local community work practices, what is at stake in such activities and how they could be different. As I suggested at the end of Article A, descriptions and analyses of what occurs may lead to further reflections

about what could be done differently. We may think, for instance, about how the social could be infrastructured differently or the consequences of making responsibilization a part of governance. We may think about what it means for social work if *care* becomes enacted when *authority* is dissociated from (Article C). Finally, it matters that we pay attention to how social science and academic expertise are configured within "applied" social sciences, such as local community work.

5.5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I argue that local community work in Denmark enacts orderings of life at the margins. I explored the specificities of this question through a qualitative inquiry, consisting of multi-sited participant observations and interviews in practices of local community work. Theoretically, this thesis is guided by the sensibilities drawn mainly from actor-network theory and STS. These have emphasised orderings of life as the on-going, precarious and multiple processes that seek to move *life* towards new openings (rather than closures), to shape human becomings. Orderings of life are enacted through material-semiotic practices; understood as multiple locally situated activities. I have posited four different orderings of life.

Firstly, local community work enacts orderings of life through *infrastructuring the social*; by making and shaping social relations in normative directions. Secondly, local community work enacts orderings of life through the precarious making of responsibility, a process which is multiple, distributed and mediated. Thirdly, local community workers, through continuous associations and dissociations, *care* for the lives of residents, and attempt to make the area less marginal and more liveable. Fourthly, through material-semiotic practices, local community work continuously specifies and transforms residents' problems.

The aim of this thesis, my ambition has been to explore the practices of local community work, as it is configured through networks of heterogeneous actors (such as policies, plans, residents, everyday documents and residential areas). Local community work, I argue, consists of multiple, messy and precarious practices. Indeed, local community work practices are the multiple collective experimentations with making change, that always focus on the local spaces in which people live.

This thesis adds to the existing literature on community work and social work by, firstly, drawing on theoretical sensibilities from STS to provide new perspectives on these practices. Secondly, it adds to the existing literature in the field of local community work and social work by providing in-depth descriptions and analyses of what actually *happens* in such practices, rather than focusing on the ambitions and intentions laid out in plans. Thirdly, this thesis provisionally indicates an engagement between STS, actor-network theory and the work of Ingold in further explorations of how human life becomes ordered and enacted.

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